

# Muay Thai Training Exercises

## The Ultimate Guide to Fitness, Strength, and Fight Preparation

Christoph Delp


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BLUE SNAKE BOOKS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

**Electronic Edition: ISBN 978-1-58394658-9**

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Published by Blue Snake Books, an imprint of North Atlantic Books
P.O. Box 12327
Berkeley, California 94712

Cover photo by Nopphadol Viwatkamolwat
Cover design by Brad Greene

Photo credits: Author's archives: this page, this page. Erwin Werzel: this page. All other photos by Nopphadol Viwatkamolwat.

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The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Delp, Christoph, 1974-
Muay Thai training exercises : the ultimate guide to fitness, strength, and fight preparation / Christoph Delp.
pages cm
ISBN 978-1-58394-657-2
1. Muay Thai. I. Title.
GV1127.T45.D48 2013
796.815—dc23

2013008225

**v3.1**

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*Title Page*
*Copyright*

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# Preface

I started kickboxing at a fairly young age. In the course of my training back home I got the impression that I was missing much of the techniques and training methods as well as the cultural aspects of Muay Thai. That is why I decided in 1995 to travel to Thailand and to learn Muay Thai like the Thai athletes do, starting from scratch. My destination was the northeast of Thailand, as I had heard that the best Thai fighters come from there. I received a friendly welcome at the Deycha Gym in Maha Sarakham, where I lived and trained with the athletes in the gym for some months. There I had the opportunity to undertake a very intensive study of the sport with the trainers Master Deycha, Saknipon Pitakvarin, and Kenpet Luksulam. I took notes of my experiences in training, the execution of techniques, and the training methodology. In the process I developed my first book, *Muay Thai: Kampf und Selbstverteidigung* (1997). I am very happy to say that my friendly relations with this camp continue to this day.

Due to my enthusiasm for Muay Thai, I started travelling to Thailand for training a few months each year. In the following years I trained at gyms in the provinces Maha Sarakham, Buriram, Surat Thani, Bangkok, and Chonburi. In the course of my travels I was lucky to be coached by the legendary fighter Apideh Sit Hiran for a number of weeks. My continued interest in Muay Thai led me to

manage a Muay Thai camp for some time, and I decided to spend as much time in Thailand as possible.

I wrote numerous books on my experiences in training, which so far have been published in German, English, Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish. I also produced a DVD series in which some of the best Thai athletes introduce a comprehensive range of techniques and training exercises. Of course, I am very grateful for the assistance and support I received from trainers and athletes in the preparation of my books and DVDs.

This book is the result of a desire to introduce training in detail: to show how the best Thai athletes plan their training sessions and how they adapt them to their individual requirements with the aim of developing outstanding skills and maximum performance potential. I also show how those who are unable to train in a club can plan their own effective training program.

I wish you a pleasant time reading this book and hope you enjoy Muay Thai training as much as I do. If you are interested in conducting your training in Thailand, you can contact me. I am planning to open a new gym with my trainers, and you are certainly welcome to visit. More details on the gym can be found at www.christophdelp.com.

More information on Muay Thai can be found on the web at www.muaythaibook.com, www.muaythaidvd.com, www.youtube.com/muaythaidvd, www.facebook.com/muaythaidvd, and www.facebook.com/muaythaibooks.

Bangkok
August 2012

# Acknowledgments

My sincere thanks to all those who have helped in writing this book, particularly my family, Master Deycha, Oliver Glatow, Hans-Eckhard Glatow, Taweesak Baoseehai, Ratchanu Jintanayong, Nopphadol Viwatkamolwat, Khru Khunsap, Khru Pit, Mister Pong, Apideh Sit Hiran, Menny Ossi, Thomas Letté, Richard Delp, and the acting athletes Nonsai, Saiyok, Kem, and Armin. Many thanks also to my trainers: Master Deycha, Apideh Sit Hiran, Khru Khunsap, Master Chalee, Raweesak, Master K, Master Wee, Master Noi, and Master Gong.



**The author (third from left) with Taweesak, Saiyok, Sanghai, Rit, and Danthai.**




Muay Thai, also known as Thai boxing, is a martial art that gradually developed over many centuries. Muay Thai was originally trained in to assert oneself in real fight situations. In the course of time Muay Thai also became popular as a competitive sport at fairs, which both gave athletes the opportunity to test their skills and provided entertainment for the audience. Today, Muay Thai is practiced as a competitive sport, for fitness, and for self-defense.

Muay Thai competitions are a spectacular sight and are extremely intensive. Fighters attack each other to full physical exhaustion with fists, elbows, kicking, and knee techniques. Thai boxers generally

have had excellent technical training, and their bodies have been trained to become muscular, high-performance instruments.

To succeed at a competitive level, a Thai boxer requires a perfectly trained body. That is the underlying reason why excellent training programs were developed for the fighter's fitness. Nowadays, fitness-oriented athletes also like to use this specific training to improve their physical shape.


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# About the Book Series

This series is made up of three books: *Muay Thai Basics* (2005), *Muay Thai Counter Techniques* (2013), and *Muay Thai Training Exercises* (2013). In the series you will become acquainted with all the details you need to know for effectively learning Muay Thai—be it training for fitness or for competition. The techniques are presented by some of the best Thai fighters, demonstrating their individual skills. When working out the training plans, we were also able also draw on the rich experience of renowned Thai trainers.

The first two books in this series, *Muay Thai Basics* and *Muay Thai Counter Techniques*, deal primarily with attacking techniques and defense and counter techniques. This book is specifically focused on training. You will learn training basics, elements of proper training, and training plans as well as combinations, feints, and favorite counters of the Thai boxing superstars Saiyok and Kem.




**Armin, Kem, Saiyok, and Nonsai.**

The book will show you how to develop into an advanced Thai boxer. Initially, it will give you an overview of training basics, aims, and motivation. The second section contains details on the training routine. Two World Champions, Saiyok and Kem, introduce their personal training styles and give some advice.

The section on solo training will show you how to plan effective training on your own, whether you are a Thai boxer active in a club or a fitness-oriented athlete training at home.

In the technical section you will first be introduced to

attacking techniques that can be used in shadowboxing, punching bag, and pad training. Saiyok and Kem then show their best counters. Feints also play an important role in Muay Thai—train in these techniques to catch your opponent by surprise and to launch effective counters.

Section five offers training plans for all performance levels: beginners, amateur athletes, and professional Thai boxers can all study the suggested plans and tailor them to their individual requirements.

Let yourself be inspired by training methods and techniques used by some of the best Thai fighters. Use the training plans and techniques to develop yourself into an outstanding Thai boxer. Have fun and success with your training!



**Christoph shows the high kick.**


MUAY THAI

**A powerful round kick from Nonsai Sor Sanyakorn.**




**Saiyok Pumphanmuang/Windysport trains with Khru Pit (Muay Thai Plaza Gym, 2012).**

Chapter 1

# Training Background

## 1. Facts Worth Knowing about Training

The fighters in Muay Thai fascinate audiences with spectacular displays. They attack each other for five rounds with outstanding athleticism and a strong will to succeed, encouraged by the cheering crowds. Thai boxers must undergo long and extremely intensive training before they can participate in competitions. They must have studied a variety of attacking techniques to perfection and must master a repertoire of defense and counter techniques against all of the opponent's attacks. Of utmost importance is complete training in all facets of physical fitness, as only thoroughly prepared athletes can succeed in competition. Should an opponent detect any weak spots, these will be attacked without mercy.

Intensive training is required to reach the level of a top athlete. The practitioner's lifestyle must also be adapted to the requirements of the martial art. With the right training, though, a young athlete will have no obstacle to emulating the best athletes of Muay Thai. Thai boxing training is also an excellent means for a fitness-oriented

athlete to get in shape. Stamina, power, agility, and coordination are intensively worked and improved. The training is fun, helps to promote self-confidence, and reduces aggression. It is also very useful as a form of self-defense. Muay Thai is considered the most effective method of upright fighting and self-defense.

The best possible training plan depends on your goals for training, motivation, and performance level. This is why the training differs somewhat among individuals. To achieve the best results in training, you must train consciously, meaning that you must clearly remember your goals in training time and again as well as how you want to achieve them. If you train without clear goals and don't question your achievement at regular intervals, you will hardly see any improvement, will plateau in your performance, and will lose motivation.

This book shows ways for any Thai boxer to succeed. Regardless of whether you conduct your own training at home or as a supplement to club training, this book will teach you the essentials of training. You will find frequent references to the basics followed by inspirational descriptions of how current world champions succeeded in reaching their fantastic level of performance.

## Training as a Fitness-Oriented Athlete

To be able to achieve continuous performance improvement as a fitness-oriented athlete in Muay Thai, it is necessary to have two or three Muay Thai training sessions per week. At times you may not be able to fit

these into your schedule. If not, try to conduct at least one training session per week. That way, your body will not completely lose the rhythm of training and will be prepared to resume more intense training later on. This is also important because of the greater risk of injury due to increased training, for example to the ligaments of the foot and the knee joints.

Whether you do additional fitness training or not depends on your physical goals. Additional training can be helpful for Muay Thai, but it’s not absolutely necessary.




**Nan trains with Christoph.**

## Training as an Amateur Athlete

If you plan to enter competitions as an amateur, your technical skills in the areas of attack, defense, and counters must be properly developed. To do this, it is recommended that you plan three to five training sessions per week. Your physical performance must also be up to

the demands of competition, which means it is sensible and frequently necessary to conduct additional training sessions in the areas of fitness and stamina.

As a competitive athlete you have to start in the appropriate weight class, which may mean that you have to lose body fat. Whether you have to adapt or change what you eat depends on your percentage of body fat.

## Training as a Professional Athlete

Professional athletes must adapt their daily routine so that they can train with the intensity required for the ambitious objectives of a professional. Thai boxers who have succeeded in earning their living with the sport have the opportunity to conduct two training sessions per day and to regenerate their bodies on a short midday break. In this way, martial art and fitness training sessions can be integrated in an optimum manner. If a Thai boxer also pursues another profession, however, the training sessions must be shorter, be carried out at higher intensity, and should be specifically tailored to the athlete's requirements.

Professional athletes have no general fixed program, as each individual has specific training requirements, and their training should be structured around preparing for upcoming competitions. But there is value in orientation, and you will find guidance for it in this book.

# 2. The Spirit of a Thai Boxer

To become a successful Thai boxer, you must focus on your target. This applies to standard training as much as for preparing for a competition. It includes mental, physical, and technical preparation. This book will show you many ways to organize, question, and improve your training. Study the following characteristics of successful Thai boxers and compare them with your own. Work on yourself to develop into a great Thai boxer.

## Vision

First of all, you must envision yourself as a Thai boxer. A vision or great desire is different for each Thai boxer. Muay Thai offers us a large number of possibilities—a magnificent athletic body, a competitive career all the way up to becoming a champion, and even the chance to earn money as a competitive athlete, trainer, or manager. Other Thai boxers train with the goal of enhancing their self-confidence and reducing their aggression or stress. For some individuals Muay Thai is an indispensable part of their lives and becomes their fundamental approach to life.

Once you come to know and understand your vision, try to visualize your objectives in detail. Become aware of what your life will look like after you have reached your main goal. Try to visualize what you have to do to bring your goal into reality. The better you are able to visualize your goal, the better you can organize your path in the

right direction.




## Courage

Extraordinary goals require courage. You must be prepared to find new ways of doing things and to change your habits. You can't rely on others or hope that they will be on the same path. Only when you pursue your own path can you attain the success you desire as a Thai boxer.

The film *Chok Dee* is based on part of the life of the French fighter Dida, who went to Thailand without much money and no specific knowledge as to what to expect; he eventually succeeded as a fighter. At that time the gyms in Thailand did not have the experience nor the interest to

train foreign fighters, which means that his career must be considered special and was only achieved by a few athletes. Danny Bille and Ramon Dekker should also be mentioned, as they were prepared to compete unconditionally and without any restrictions against the best Thai fighters in their weight class.

## Concentration

To be able to reach your great goal in Muay Thai, you must concentrate completely on achievement. There are many distractions on the way; you must be aware of them and avoid them. As an example, it is absolutely indispensable for a fighter to concentrate completely on preparation for a fight. It's necessary to explain your plans to your family to gain their understanding, so that you don't have to waste valuable energy in conflict and negotiation.

The Thai boxing superstar Saiyok Pumphanmuang had the chance to return as a competitive fighter after about a year away from competition. He concentrated completely on this opportunity, and his family supported him with their understanding; he succeeded in not losing a single fight in the subsequent four years.



A flying kick from Armin Windysport.

## Ambition

No Thai boxer will succeed without the necessary ambition. It can be developed in many ways, and the more focused you are on your motivation and the ambition it develops, the more you can focus on your career as a Thai boxer.

Some preconditions can't be changed and must be accepted. Some Thai boxers are fortunate to have extraordinary talent and to learn technical skills quickly, or to have an extraordinary performance level in areas of fitness, such as physical strength, speed, and stamina. Other Thai boxers are superbly promoted by an especially good trainer. Still, without the necessary ambition, a successful Thai boxing career is impossible. If you face a difficult starting point, keep in mind that the attainment of your goal may take quite some time. The ambition you develop, however, will pay long-term dividends. For example, in a competition, your ambition might allow you to make one move more than your opponent, which might prove to be the decisive advantage.

Terdkiat Sitteppetiak was one of Muay Thai's superstars in the 1990s and was considered one of the world's best fighters for years. He was known to train mostly by himself in his home province, and he joined larger training groups in Bangkok only for short periods. Only by his overpowering ambition and clear vision of his objectives was he able to achieve his extraordinary level

of performance.

## Stamina

Be aware that it can take a long time for you to succeed in reaching your goal. For example, a beginner will only be able to become a champion after years of intensive training. Therefore it makes sense to divide your goal into a number of smaller goals. You will experience phases when you feel that you aren't making progress. At that point it's important not to give up or neglect your training, and not to lose sight of your goal. Keep at it and work on your dream. The more difficult it is to reach a goal, the more satisfied you will be with your success. Rebuilding stamina is especially important after being injured. You should also not despair after losing a match, but learn from your mistakes and improve that way.

Present-day Thai superstar Kem Sitsongpeenong stopped fighting for one year after his first loss and continued his daily training in professional conditions. After that year he was ready for his athletic career, and at that point he started to earn his living as a professional athlete.

## Discipline

Without the necessary discipline, no great goal can be achieved in Muay Thai. It's not crucial to train intensively from time to time; it is crucial to increase your training load continually in an appropriate manner. Skilled Thai boxers do not develop after a few weeks of intensive

training but through continuous effort. A short period of more intensive training, for instance several weeks at a Thai training camp, can be helpful. What is decisive, however, is that your training continues at regular intervals.

The best Thai athletes reflect on their years of disciplined and intensive daily training. Only in that way have they been able to reach their high level of performance.

## Self-Confidence

You must firmly believe in the successful effect of your training. Don't be unsettled by other people's opinions, and don't move away from your objectives and your path as a Thai boxer. Be convinced that you can reach your goal and give your best along the way. This is also extremely important in a competition, because the knowledge of your own strength will give you the necessary self-confidence.

The legendary Thai fighter Kaoklai competed in Japan with an official weight of about 175 pounds against the world's best heavyweight fighters, and he won. His opponents had an advantage of twelve inches in height and eighty-five pounds in weight. Only a few people considered this to be possible, but Kaoklai firmly believed in himself and in his fight strategy, and he was successful.

## Respect

You should be aware that you can only reach your objectives in Muay Thai with the help of a trainer, a training group, family, and friends. Respect is a fundamental characteristic of a Muay Thai fighter. You must also pay respect to your opponent in a competition as it's only possible to reach your athletic objectives, after all, through an opponent. Bear in mind that your opponent went through similar rigorous training in preparation for the fight. This is why you often see a friendly embrace between the athletes after a hard fight.

In Muay Thai you will notice time and again how much respect the fighters have for each other. You can also see how many Muay Thai fighters, used to competing intensively against one other, have become good friends.

## The Will to Sacrifice

To be successful as a Thai boxer with competitive ambitions, it is necessary to make sacrifices in other aspects of your life. For example, you can't be expected to be a successful athlete over an extended period if you regularly indulge in long nights of partying and drinking. A young body is indeed able to cope better with such strain, but starting from the age of thirty, a heavy training load and nightlife contradict each other. Thai boxers are more prone to injury if the body has been mistreated over the years with too much alcohol and too little regeneration. A healthy lifestyle puts the body in a position to tolerate some additional years of intensive training.

With respect to eating habits, an appropriate diet and maintaining a constant body weight close to your optimum fight weight are important. If a Thai boxer always has to lose a lot of weight before a fight, it will be an additional intensive strain on the body.

## The Will to Learn

Athletes who are convinced of their skills and who are not willing to take on new techniques and possible improvements lose the chance to make the best of their training. For a successful career in Muay Thai, having the will to learn and to question yourself is fundamental.

The great success of the training group at Muay Thai Plaza in Bangkok is due to the athletes comparing their training skills with those of foreign athletes during their stays abroad. They discuss the experiences they have had and add interesting findings to their training.

## Modesty

A great Thai boxer is also characterized by modesty. It is a real pleasure getting to know former top athletes who are friendly, polite, and reserved. The physical superiority gained through Muay Thai should be used for the benefit of fellow beings and not as an advantage over others. Modesty does not mean, however, accepting exploitation. Professional Muay Thai is a means to earn money, and thus it attracts a variety of shady characters, for instance trainers without experience and unscrupulous agents and

managers. You must always be cautious and guarded and keep focused on your goals.


NIKE

**For many followers of Muay Thai, Apideh Sit Hiran (right) was not only the best fighter of all time but also a special individual. He was known for his modesty and polite treatment of his fellow human beings. Even in old age he continued training and enthusiastically promoted his students.**

## An Interview with Kem

Kem Sitsongpeenong is currently one of the best-known Thai boxers and is perhaps the most popular boxer in Thailand. He holds a number of Thai and World Champion titles. In 2011 he won the Thai Fight Tournament, which was extensively covered on Thai television. Since then, Kem has also enjoyed the admiration of many Thais who had no previous interest in Muay Thai.

Kem has an excellent basic technique, fights with deliberation, and is always prepared for the opportunity to use a knockout technique. He tries to avoid being maneuvered into a defensive position and uses many direct counter techniques with the aim of hitting his opponent first. His opponents are particularly wary of his elbow techniques, which have led to the abrupt end of many fights in the past. This interview was conducted in Bangkok in 2012.

**Christoph Delp: Where did you grow up, and how did you start training?**

Kem Sitsongpeenong: I spent the first years of my life in Maha Sarakham Province [in the northeast]. Then I followed my father to Bangkok because he was working there. Even before I got to Bangkok, I had always been fascinated by Muay Thai. My father knew this and brought me to a camp for training.

**What does Muay Thai mean for you?**

Muay Thai is an important life experience for me, and it's also my profession, which provides my income.

**When did you start training? What was your first professional fight like, and how did your career develop?**

I started my regular training at the age of thirteen. In my first fight I lacked a lot of skill, and I lost. My opponent advised me to increase my training. The following year I concentrated on diligent training, and I didn't compete in any fights. Then I was prepared to start my competitive career. After my first ten fights, I moved to the Sor Ploenjit Camp.

**Who has had the greatest influence on your**

**competitive career?**

Kaensak Sor Ploenjit was very important for my athletic development. As a young boxer he was a shining role model for me, and he still is today. He has good techniques, he's physically strong, and he's able to read a fight situation. I watched his training to learn and develop similar skills.

**What were your experiences abroad? What was your first fight against a foreigner like?**

The trips abroad were really interesting. I speak some English, which helps a lot. I love my home country, Thailand, very much, which is why I feel most comfortable here. My first fight abroad was in Suriname. I was very tired after the long journey, and I had to shed considerable weight to be able compete in the 145-pound weight class, which I had agreed to. I still won.

**What is different about fighting a foreigner rather than a Thai?**

To fight a Thai athlete, I have to prepare myself with intensive training, particularly concentrating on knee techniques and clinching. Foreign fighters are physically strong, but sometimes they are concerned about technical skills, particularly elbow techniques,

and are somewhat nervous in their fights.

### What does the future hold in Muay Thai and in your life?

I will compete in some more important competitions before I finish my athletic career. In two or three years I would like to be in charge of a gym along with my manager. This could certainly be abroad. I have bought a few apartments that I rent out. I also plan to open a small supermarket in that building.

### What is important in becoming a successful fighter?

To improve, you have to be full of energy, always keep training, and be open to new developments. Never cast any doubt on your goals or deviate from them. It is also very important to have a role model in Muay Thai, like Kaensak is for me, and to follow him and imitate his style.

### Would you like to say a few words to your fans and the readers of this book?

I would very much like to thank all my fans who follow my fights. I will always do my best. To the readers, I advise you to read this book carefully, as it will be a great help in your training. I wish all the

readers of this book much success in Muay Thai.



## 3. Training Plans

Any physically healthy person can grow into a competent Thai boxer by sticking to a sensible training plan. To do this, you have to keep in mind your goals, your training program, regeneration, and nutrition. If your training program seems excessive, keep in mind how motivating it will be to achieve your training goals and see clearly recognizable improvement in your performance.

## Clear Objectives

First, assess your physical condition and performance level. Think through clearly what you want to achieve with Thai boxing training to determine your training goals. Clear goals are a prerequisite to starting and continuing your training. If you stay aware of your goals and concentrate on implementing them, you will soon achieve distinct success. For example, you can learn some techniques and in six months significantly improve your physical condition.

## Performance-Focused Training

It's important to train with a weekly plan and at an intensity level that is in line with your performance level. This kind of planned training provides the best results. For example, you can set the number of weekly Muay Thai training sessions and the frequency of additional fitness sessions. You can change the organization of your training sessions in a club training environment in that you can make changes with the agreement of your trainer if you feel that the demands are too little or too much. Use the programs introduced in section 5 below as guide to organizing your training.

## Regeneration and Appropriate Diet

Your performance will improve by stimulating your body with an increasing training regimen. After physical exertion, you need a rest in order to regenerate, so that

your body can produce better results in the next training session. Rapid regeneration also requires sufficient sleep. A rule of thumb is that you should sleep an hour longer than you usually need when you're not training.

In this book you will also learn about your diet as an athlete and how you can reduce your body fat (see section 7 in chapter 2). As a matter of principle it's not necessary to worry too much about your diet as long as you adhere to the important dietary principles introduced in chapter 2. If you have deficiencies in your nutrition, you will be more prone to injury and will be unable to summon your best performance.

## Important Tips: Successful Training

Use the following principles for successful training:

- Set goals for yourself.
- Give it your best effort.
- Learn from your role models.
- Question your training program.
- Find new ways of doing things.
- Believe in yourself and in your success.



**World champions and presenters of the Muay Thai DVD series: Jaochalam, Armin, Kem, and Antuan. Bangkok, 2011.**

# 4. Training Documentation

On your way to realizing your goals in Muay Thai, I recommend that you keep a record of your training in a training book. With the help of the book you can follow

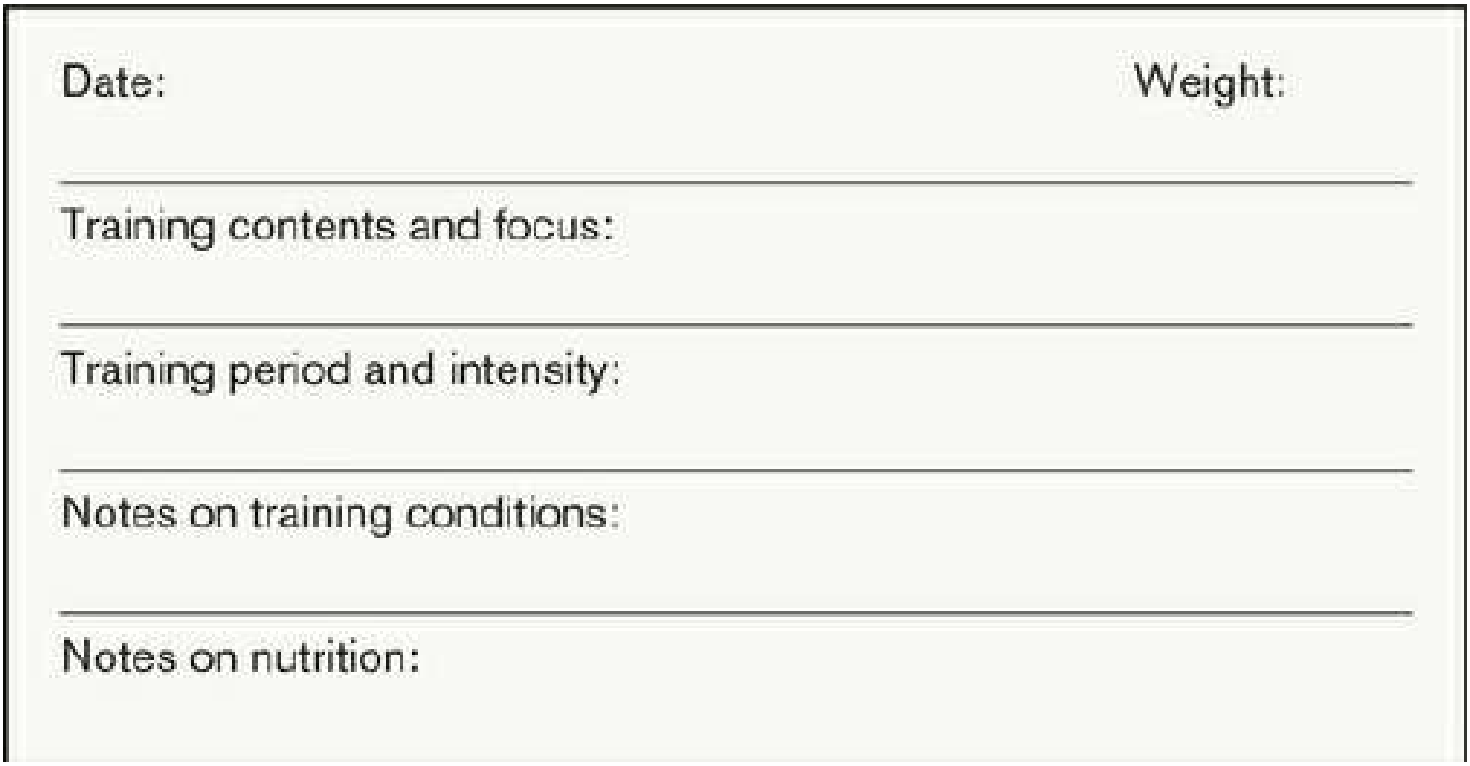
and monitor the development of your athletic skills over the long term. Many Thai boxers don't keep documentation of their training yet, but you should use all possible means to achieve the best results in training. I kept a book during my training in camps in northeast Thailand and recorded the intensity, programs, and technical details of my training. These notes turned out to be of great help in writing my books.




**The two champions Saiyok and Nonsai while sparring.**

It's best to start taking notes once you start training. After each training session, you should gather the information you have on your performance. In Muay Thai,

take note of the focus in technical training and the number of rounds. For strength training, record the exercises, weights, sets, and repeats, and for stamina training, keep a record of the distance covered, training time, and average heart rate. It also makes sense to take notes on the prevailing framework of your training, as athletic performance is influenced by factors such as stress, nutrition, and sleep. These notes will be helpful in the future as they will help you see the reasons for successes or failures. You will also learn from these records how your body reacts to changes in your training. The information will help you to organize future training programs in a more effective way.




**Example of training documentation.**

I recommend a three-ring binder as a training book because you can always add pages. Design your training

book to fit your needs: you can collect notes as simple bullet points or write longer descriptions describing your day's training. It's important to deal intensively with your training, always visualizing your goals and your programs, and then referring back to your notes to check on them. Hardly anyone was thinking about conscious training plans fifteen years ago in Thailand, but today Muay Thai athletes use stretching exercises and vary their strength exercises while trainers discuss different training programs. Muay Thai has become an international sport, and if you want to be on par with the best athletes, you have to have the best possible individual training tailored to your own needs.



**Kem Sitsongpeenong trains the round kick.**

# 5. Preparing for a Competitive Career

Basically, any healthy person can develop into a skilled Thai boxer. There are certain things you should do to prepare yourself, however, before you can compete successfully in competitions.

## Physical Performance

Muay Thai competitors must have good bone structure and a resilient locomotory system. The better your physical condition is, the easier it will be to pursue a successful athletic career. The body of a top athlete develops over years of intensive training. Energy, ambition, and perseverance are decisive for a Muay Thai career. Thai boxers must optimize their physical performance standard. This includes stamina and strength training in addition to the training that is specific to Muay Thai along with a healthy lifestyle.

## Appropriate Fight Weight

The fight weight shouldn't thwart a career. As an athlete you should compete with a minimum of body fat, as a fully trained opponent of the same weight would otherwise have an advantage in strength. Up to 3 percent of body fat can be lost in a month with training and an appropriate diet.

## Selecting a Trainer

Selecting a trainer and a school are extremely important for a competitive career, because without a good technical school and appropriate training conditions, you won't be able to succeed in high-level competitions. If you train conscientiously and continue absorbing new knowledge, you can determine whether it's necessary to change your training regimen or possibly change your trainer.

## Age

It is an advantage, but not of fundamental importance, to start Muay Thai training at the age of fifteen to eighteen. Many athletes who started training when they were older have still been able to enjoy international success. It is generally assumed that an athlete should be ready to compete in competitions after two years of intensive training.

## Plans for an Athletic Career

It is also extremely important to plan your athletic career properly. If the task is taken on by a manager, you must first take a good look at that person's background and keep control of things. A manager can work on a boxer's career for the long term or could just be interested in short-term profit.

## Belief in Yourself

As a Thai boxer, you must believe in yourself and never doubt your goals. If your trainer and your personal environment don't offer the necessary support, you can try other ways to realize your dream. It is important to give it your best at all times. As an athlete you never know when your career will come to an end, as you could suffer a career-ending injury at any time. This happened to me, and I was unable to continue fighting in competitions. If you always give your best, you will be better prepared—should it happen that way—to accept the unplanned end

to your competitive career.



**Nonsai trains his powerful kicks on a heavy bag.**

## Will

If you dream of becoming a top athlete in Muay Thai and are convinced of the path you have to take to do it, you must stick with your decision and not be dissuaded by others. Don't postpone your goals to focus on other priorities. You never know what difficulties may arise in the future that could make intensive training impossible. At a certain age, the body will not be prepared to conduct intensive competitive training. Physical wear and tear happens differently for different people, but from the age of thirty-five it's very difficult to train at the high intensity required for competition.

## An Interview with Trainer Khru Pit

For ten years Khru Pit had a career as a professional fighter. He competed in more than one hundred fights and won the championship of Ubon Province. He was known as a technically skilled fighter with a deliberate fight style that included a variety of push kicks. In his fights he studied his opponent's conduct and developed a strategy to exploit his opponent's shortcomings. Some ten years ago he started working as a trainer in Ubon, motivated to

use his experience to train athletes to become even better than he was. After several years he moved to Bangkok and became a trainer at the Muay Thai Plaza Gym. These days he is the chief trainer of many world champions. This interview was conducted in Bangkok in 2012.

**Christoph Delp: Which boxers are you training these days?**

Khru Pit: I have been training Saiyok for three and a half years, Armin for two and a half years, and Jaochalam for three years. Occasionally I train Nonsai, and I also monitor his training.



**Khru Pit (right) with his student Saiyok. Bangkok, 2012.**

## What does Muay Thai mean for you and your life?

Muay Thai is part of our cultural heritage for us Thais, and to me it means respect.

## Can you describe Saiyok's fight style? What do you look for in his training?

Saiyok's fight style features swift action with a lot of combinations. He frequently uses powerful techniques such as knee kicks, elbows, or straight punches to try to get a knockout. Saiyok is already very quick and strong. He must learn not only to fight in his own style but to react better to an opponent's style. Specifically, he must improve his knowledge of foreign fighters and learn how to use his skills against their styles.

## Can you describe Nonsai's fight style? What do you look for in his training?

Nonsai is a fighter with powerful punches and knee kicks, and he has a very powerful physique. He has to do plenty of running to strengthen his leg muscles. We conduct his training so that the impact of his punches and kicks is as hard as possible. Our objective is to improve his speed, as he still has potential in this area.

## Can you describe Armin's fight style? What do you look for in his training?

Armin is a spectacular fighter and uses several traditional Muay Thai Boran techniques. It's not

difficult to train him. It's important for him to improve his technique and his feeling for distance. Furthermore, he must always continue to train in his trademark flying techniques. Master Deycha shows Armin traditional techniques, which he adds to his training.

### How do you instruct your boxers to organize the days leading up to a competition?

The athletes undergo two days of very hard training before the intensity is reduced in the last week. They initially have four days of light training, and in the last three days they only concentrate on shadowboxing to become aware of fight tactics. In addition, they use the time to reduce their weight and for massages.

### What diet do you recommend for the athletes? What's your opinion on performance-enhancing supplements?

With respect to nutrition, I focus on the daily consumption of beef, rice, and vegetables. Beef is important as it strengthens the body. Soy milk can be used as an extra source of protein. Athletes must drink plenty of water and very little alcohol, and in the last three weeks before a fight, they have to

abstain completely. Soft drinks are acceptable as they refresh the athlete. I don't like the idea of steroids.

## What are your plans for the future in Muay Thai?

I want my athletes to grow even stronger, and for the entire training group in our gym to improve. The athletes compete in many countries and visit many gyms, where they are introduced to new ideas that we can use in our training here. I would like to continue improving our repertoire of techniques. We would like to add Muay Thai Boran techniques and also elements of the European fight style. I want my boxers to adopt a variable fight style. They should always be able to change their style to surprise and unsettle their opponents. I would like to spend the next ten to twenty years in Bangkok training fighters. After that, I'd like to return to my home province, Ubon, and manage a small gym there for young athletes. Muay Thai means a lot to me, and that is why I will always remain connected to it.

## What is important to become a successful fighter?

The most important things are perseverance and the motivation to do intensive training. You must believe in yourself and keep on working on your

career. Never let yourself be distracted from your goals. If it's possible to train like a Thai student, that will be of great value. I recommend that the readers come to Thailand for training, so that they get to know the style of training here and the Thai lifestyle. It's best to eat what Thai fighters eat, adopt the same intensive training techniques, and leave sufficient time for regeneration.

## Would you like to say anything else to the readers of this book?

I advise careful study of this book and to read it time and again. You must take time to learn Muay Thai. It's not unusual that the learning process takes five to ten years. Some individuals require one year, others five or ten years before they become skilled Thai boxers. Each individual is different, and each has other talents and preconditions. Training should not be done excessively but should be enjoyed while not losing sight of your goals.



## 6. Developing Technical Skills

In Muay Thai, initially you learn the basic stance, leg work, and basic techniques. Once you have acquired a certain degree of skill, you start learning an initial set of counter techniques. In the course of your athletic career, step by step you add more counters, feints, and traditional techniques to your repertoire. Keep in mind that you have to continue training in the techniques you have mastered. That way, your techniques will get faster and stronger, and

your timing will improve. The aim is to use these techniques instinctively in a competition.

A well-rounded Muay Thai athlete must be able to carry out attacking techniques swiftly and with power. You must also have mastered a selection of defense and counter techniques against all possible attacks by your opponent. In addition, advanced fighters must also have some feints and traditional techniques in their repertoire.

In a fight you must study your opponent's maneuvers. If you identify shortcomings, wait for your chance to exploit them. Don't always use the same techniques; be variable. Mislead your opponent with feints so that he opens his guard and you can launch an effective attack. Use Muay Boran techniques to surprise your opponent and to deliver effective strikes. Wait for the opportunity to use a knockout technique to put a rapid end to the match.

## Basic Techniques

As a novice in Muay Thai you must first practice the basic stance. From this position you learn how to move toward and away from the opponent. Next you learn to memorize the attacking techniques, which include fist, elbow, shin, foot, and knee techniques. Practice the attacking techniques initially at a slow pace and subsequently with increasing speed into the air. If you succeed in correct execution of the techniques, you can start training on a punching bag and with a partner. The techniques are first trained in individually before you can train by sparring with someone else.

This book has descriptions of the most frequently used attacking techniques. A complete list of all attacking techniques can be found in the book *Muay Thai Basics* (2014) and the DVD *Muay Thai: Basic Techniques* (2012).

## Counter Techniques

Once you have dedicated some training sessions to learning the basic skills, you can start training in an initial selection of counter techniques. Counter techniques are always a combination of defense and attacking techniques. The opponent's attack is either stopped by a faster technique, or your initial defense is followed by a quick counter. That way your opponent is effectively hit and you stop any further techniques. Counters are classified as active or passive. In the case of an active counter, you prevent the success of your opponent's attack with a faster technique of your own. This is called a direct counter. With a passive counter, you initially defend yourself and follow promptly with your own attacking technique. Passive counters can be categorized as dodging, deflecting, blocking, and catching counters.




**Claudia Hein (Miss Germany) training in Muay Thai.**

A counter technique is generally more successful if

fewer steps are required to implement it. Your opponent won't wait until you have completed your counter technique but will try to interrupt it as quickly as possible.

In this book, Saiyok and Kem demonstrate some of the techniques they have used most successfully in their fights. Use these techniques to augment your repertoire and to surprise your opponent in a fight. You can see some of these counters in motion on the DVD *Muay Thai: Training with World Champions: Saiyok and Kem* (2013).

A detailed account of all possible attacks can be found in the book *Muay Thai Counter Techniques* (2013). You can also watch many counters on the internet at www.youtube.com/muaythaidvd and on two DVDs—*Muay Thai: Counter against Fist and Leg Techniques* (2012) and *Muay Thai: Counter against Elbow, Knee, and Clinch Techniques* (2012).

## Feints

To be a well-rounded Thai boxer, you must learn a repertoire of feints by heart. Feints are used to mislead and tempt your opponent out of the protective stance. In a feint, you indicate an attacking technique to a specific part of the body so that your opponent shifts to defend it. To do this, your opponent has to reduce protection of another part of the body, which can then be hit effectively with your subsequent technique.

Carry out feints at a level or on the side of the body that is different from the follow-up technique. The feint

must be swift and the body must be kept in a relaxed state. If your feint is slow, your opponent will be able to stop the subsequent technique. A feint is frequently carried out as an incomplete move, and the opponent receives only minimal impact; the subsequent technique is delivered with full power.

In this book you will become acquainted with the most popular feints. Not every feint can be performed easily by every Thai boxer, however. Test the feints with the front and rear of your body, and choose the techniques that are best for your fight style. Train in the feints until you can perform the moves automatically. Only a perfectly executed feint will be successful in a fight. Becoming a successful fighter doesn't mean you have to master all the feints shown in this book. Then again, the more techniques you can deliver instinctively, the harder it will be for your opponent to figure you out.

You can see the feints in motion on the DVD *Muay Thai: Training and Techniques* (2013). Examples of some feints can also be seen on the internet at www.youtube.com/muaythaidvd.

## Traditional Techniques

In the course of your training experience you will also get to know the traditional Muay Thai Boran techniques. Muay Thai experts like to use these techniques in competition because they are effective, easily surprise the opponent, and can lead to an early knockout.

The fifteen traditional Mae Mai techniques are the best-

known moves. They enable Muay Thai boxers to improve their conduct in a fight and to combine defense and counters at the same time. The techniques are taught somewhat differently by different trainers, which is why you will see various modes of execution. You can find a detailed account of the fifteen Mae Mai techniques in the book *Muay Thai Counter Techniques* (2013).

There are many more techniques originating from Muay Thai Boran, but they are taught only by a few trainers in Thailand. Generally speaking, you should only begin training in the historic techniques after you've gained extensive experience in Muay Thai. In your efforts to become a skilled fighter, it's not necessary to train in all possible techniques that you become aware of in the course of your Muay Thai career. Many of the current Thai champions are unable to perform most of them. It's sufficient to learn about the historic techniques and to use those that are easily understood and correspond to your individual talents.

## Important Tips: Training in Techniques

To become a Thai boxer with special skills, you have to train conscientiously. You also have to work continuously on your repertoire of techniques by

testing and adding new techniques. You must also optimize technical details, adapt them to your individual skills, and learn them in such a way that they contribute to your conduct in an intensive fight.

You will often meet Thai boxers with only a few years or even a few months of training who are convinced they have mastered it all. You will also meet former fighters who have had athletic success with their individual skills and are now very much convinced of their Muay Thai skills. A Muay Thai boxer is free to choose the route best suited to him or her. Still, you can improve so many aspects of your training if you train conscientiously and question your own performance. Even an experienced Thai boxer can work on fine-tuning the basic techniques time and again. The straight punch, for example, is taught in most schools in a uniform way, but you can still work on its technical details, such as shifting your weight, the conscious use of your shoulder and trunk muscles, stability, the energy from the heel of your rear foot, and the impact of your fist.

For counter training, you should first select a few techniques and study them. Train in them time and again and add new techniques to your repertoire so that you learn by heart the moves against all possible attacks by an opponent. Repeat some of the

counters intensively in training and try out new counters you have learned or have seen carried out by athletes that you admire.

Once you have adopted a selection of the feints introduced in this book, you have to keep on training them. They will only be successful in a competition if they are carried out instinctively and fast. Take a close look at fights with the best of Thai boxers. Pay attention to when and how the fighters use their feints and test that experience in training.

There are countless Muay Thai Boran techniques and their variants. You will get to know some of the traditional techniques in club training, and you can also find many variants on various YouTube channels. Test the techniques, and if you find that one or more variants are suited to your style, train in them with your training partner. Repeat the techniques regularly in training and learn them by heart for use in competition.

In each training session, you should dedicate some time to conscientious technical training. Depending on your training plan and performance level, you can fine-tune your basic techniques, counter techniques, feints, or traditional techniques. After concentrated training in the details, your techniques will improve further on the punching bag and pads in terms of swiftness, stamina, and

applied force, thereby developing your instinctive fight conduct. Only when you perfect the technical execution in all its aspects will you be successful in applying it against an experienced opponent.

When training with a partner, you can decide on the techniques beforehand and repeat them a number of times before you take turns. Usually you can intensively train in about five techniques per training session, regardless of whether they are attacking techniques, counter techniques, feints, or traditional techniques.

In your technical training it is important that the techniques are not carried out at full strength as you don’t want to risk injury to your partner. Techniques must be carried out precisely, however, or their use will often not be successful.


MUAY THAI




**Armin Windsport shows a flying elbow technique.**

Chapter 2

# Effective Training

## 1. Basics

The following pages provide an overview of the contents of training. Muay Thai training is structured in a similar way at every club. The length of time, intensity, and sequence of the components of training depend on your goals, performance level, and fight style. To develop into an advanced boxer, you have to engage in every aspect of training.

For comparing different training structures, a description is provided of how Kem and Saiyok, two of the world's best Thai boxers, have adapted the contents and intensity of training to their own needs.

### The Contents of Training

Training comprises warm-up, main, and cool-down phases. In the warm-up phase you prepare your body for training. This phase includes exercises to warm up the body stretch your muscles, and mobilize your joints. In the main part of training you study attacking techniques as well as defense and counter techniques. Train in these while

shadowboxing, on training equipment, and with a partner. Advanced athletes also exercise by sparring. The cool-down phase usually starts with some muscle-strengthening exercises. Concentrate on the muscles in your upper body and on the muscles you didn't focus on in the main part of the training. Training ends with some stretching exercises and cooling down the muscles.

The recommended times listed below are general guidelines. Trainers develop their own programs, but they must be somewhat similar to this one to be sure that they cover all the important elements of Muay Thai training. If you train on your own, you should adapt the following plan to your own requirements and performance level. If your goal is greater agility, for example, you can intensify the stretching program. If you don't have a partner, extend the shadowboxing and training on the punching bag. The muscle workout can be omitted if you regularly train your muscles in other training sessions.



**Saiyok Pumphanmuang and Kem Sitsongpeenong practice counter techniques.**

# Frequently Asked Questions: Training in the Past

Centuries ago, everyday products and objects were included in training, including coconuts, lemons, and *pakowma*–a piece of cloth similar to a sarong that was worn around the hips instead of trousers. Training varied somewhat from trainer to trainer and was usually structured so that the student was initially shown the starting position and footwork, which they subsequently had to train until the movements started to look natural and entered the subconscious mind, regardless of how long it took.

The next step was teaching the punching technique with the help of a pakowma. Students put it around their shoulders and took the ends in their fists. They practiced the straight punch while stepping, holding the other hand up for protection. Two pakowma were initially used to protect the hands while sparring. The next steps differed significantly from teacher to teacher, which is why only a few of the traditional training methods will be explained.

Students practiced their techniques on a banana tree. The tree was cut at head height and set in the

sand. Students had to punch, push, and kick the tree on both sides, if possible, until the tree broke through. They trained their muscles on a coconut tree, climbing up by holding on to the tree with outstretched arms. In this way they developed their arm, shoulder, back, and leg muscles. The sea, lakes, and rivers were also used for training. Swimming and jogging in knee-deep water strengthened the muscles and improved stamina. Another training method was to perform punches and elbow kicks with the water at chest height, hitting the water from above. In the process, students tried to avoid blinking, and they practiced defense techniques against the splashing water. They would also put a coconut into the water and follow it with punches and elbow kicks until holes appeared in it, water flowed in, and it eventually sank. This was initially done with bandaged hands, while advanced students used their bare hands. Lemons were also used for training, hung at neck height on strings. Students moved along the row of lemons delivering punches, elbow thrusts, and defense and counter techniques in a training method that taught timing and vision, and the trainer was able to ascertain whether students were instinctively able to defend themselves correctly. One method they used to learn how to fall was that the trainer, holding a stick in each hand, hit the student on one side, where the

student then had to fall. This was practiced until the student was able to roll out of a fall.

1. Warm-up: 15–30 minutes
   - Warm-up exercise: 10–20 minutes
   - Stretching and joint mobilization: 5–10 minutes
2. Technique training: 50–90 minutes
   - Shadowboxing training: 2–3 rounds × 3–5 minutes
   - Pad training: 3–5 Rounds × 3–5 minutes
   - Punching bag training: 3–5 Rounds × 3–5 minutes
   - Partner training: 10–20 minutes
   - Sparring: 10–20 minutes (only advanced athletes, and not in each training session)
   - Clinch training: 5–10 minutes
3. Cool down: 15 minutes
   - Power training: about 5 minutes
   - Low-intensity exercise: about 5 minutes
   - Stretching and joint mobilization: about 5 minutes

# Saiyok and Kem

The fighters Saiyok and Kem have adapted the standard program to their requirements. Use their programs for inspiration, but note that training at this level of intensity can only be done by professional athletes. The way that these two athletes conduct their training can be seen in the DVD *Muay Thai: Training with World Champions: Saiyok and Kem* (2013) and at www.youtube.com/muaythaidvd.

Both athletes train twice a day. Saiyok trains about two and a half hours in the morning and three and a half hours in the afternoon. On Sunday he reduces his training. Kem trains for about three hours each in the morning and afternoon. He only trains on Sunday if he is preparing for a fight. Both athletes reduce the training intensity three days before a fight to allow for regeneration and to shed weight. After the fight they take a rest of approximately one week.

1. Warm-up
   - Rub in massage oil and relax
   - Jogging
     - Saiyok: 3–6 miles
     - Kem: 90–120 minutes, only in the morning
   - Skipping
     - Saiyok: 20–30 minutes
     - Kem: 20 minutes

2. Technique training

Shadowboxing

Saiyok: 3–4 Rounds × 4 minutes

Kem: 1 Round × 5 minutes

Pad training

Saiyok: 3–5 Rounds × 4 minutes

Kem: 4–6 Rounds × 4 minutes

Punching bag training

Saiyok and Kem: 4–5 Rounds × 4 minutes

Partner training and sparring

Saiyok: 30–60 minutes

Kem: 15–20 minutes

Clinch training

Saiyok: 15–20 minutes, only 4 times in the afternoon

Kem: 20–30 minutes

3. Cool down

Strength training

Saiyok and Kem: 15–20 minutes

Cool down and relax

# An Interview with Saiyok

Saiyok Pumphanmuang is Muay Thai World Champion and has many Thai titles, including Lumpinee Champion in the highest weight class. He has competed in more than 230 professional fights and received the honor of Best Thai Boxer in 2010. At the time this book was written, he had been undefeated for four years. He has competed in many countries and has given seminars, and his many fans are fascinated by his spectacular fight style. He first studies his opponent's fight conduct and then attacks with explosive combinations, which he frequently finishes with a low kick, an elbow, or a flying knee kick. This interview took place in Bangkok in 2012.

**Christoph Delp: Where did you grow up, and how did you start training?**

Saiyok Pumphanmuang: I grew up in Phitsanulok. When I was eleven my father brought me to a gym and I participated in a training fight. I had no technical skills, but I won the fight. The local trainers saw my talent and invited me to join them for regular training.

## What does Muay Thai mean to you in your life?

Muay Thai is my profession, and like other people going to work, I have workdays and free time. My income depends on my results in competitions. Muay Thai has provided me with a better lifestyle. I hope that Muay Thai, an important part of Thai cultural heritage, will continue to exist in the way we still remember the fighter Nai Khanom Tom today. I also hope that Muay Thai will become an Olympic sport.

## When did you start your training? What was your first professional fight like, and how did your career develop?

I started my training at the Kai Yomarat Camp Sor Payayam [in Phitsanulok]. At the time I had already competed in two fights. In my first fight I was nervous and excited, and I followed my instincts. My brother prepared me, and we used ideas we got from watching fights on TV. After two years of training in Phitsanulok my trainer sent me to the bigger camp in Kantaburi, where I trained from age thirteen until I was twenty-one. I now train at the Muay Thai Plaza Gym in Bangkok. My manager is Mr. Pong, and my trainer is Khru Pit. I like to train at a gym with a friendly atmosphere, and that's the case at the Muay Thai Plaza Gym. Other gyms offered contracts, but I

don’t like the idea of signing one.

## Who has had an impact on your competitive career?

My first trainer was a soldier, and he had a great impact on my career. He’s like a second father to me and helped me a lot. The Muay Thai Plaza Gym is also important for me, as they really look after me, and I’m a member of a successful training group because skills are best developed with a partner and a trainer.

I draw my inspiration from other people–from boxers, spectators and foreigners. This also applies to Manny Pacquiáo [the Filipino traditional boxer]. His matches are always sold out, and even Hollywood stars travel to watch him fight. I hope that Muay Thai also gains such great popularity.

## What were your experiences abroad? What was your first fight with a foreigner like?

I have enjoyed lots of nice trips. I am proud to see foreigners training in Muay Thai. They learn well and quickly. My first foreign opponent was the Australian Ben Button. The competition was in Hong Kong in the 145-pound weight class. I won with a knockout in the first round after a leg kick and an

elbow to the head.

## What is different in fighting Thais versus foreigners?

Thai fighters have a very good command of the Muay Thai techniques, and they have skills in Mae Mai Muay Thai. Foreigners usually excel with their fist techniques but are less skilled in Muay Thai. They often fight instinctively and mix kickboxing and Muay Thai. For the best possible preparation, they study video clips of our fights. Thai fighters will have to do the same in the future.

## What have you got planned for your future in Muay Thai and in your life?

I would like to remain active in Muay Thai for as long as possible, and I would also like to learn more about Mae Mai Muay Thai. I will always give my best in training and in competitions. After my career I would like to build up a training camp for children to keep them away from drugs. I hope that one day I'll be able to open such a gym jointly with a friend. Currently I am building a house in Ubon Ratchathani [in northeast Thailand], where I own a plantation. I enjoy a peaceful environment and a simple life. I plan to have a garden and to live with

my wife and my children in Ubon Ratchathani.

### What is important to become a successful fighter?

You have to be honest with yourself about the requirements of your profession and your own performance. All your energy has to be brought into your career. In training it's important to perfect your conduct, specifically in defense and counters.

### Would you like to say a few words to your fans and to the readers of this book?

I would like to thank all my fans. I will keep on intensifying my training for further improvement, and I take much pride in the fact that my fans accompany me and watch my fights. I advise the readers of this book to study it carefully and to learn the techniques of training.

# 2. Warm-Up Phase

In the warm-up phase, you prepare your body for training. To achieve this, you must first warm up your muscles; jogging and skipping rope are recommended for this. You then bandage your hands, stretch your body, and loosen

up the joints. Before the training session you can rub on warming massage oil. The warm-up helps you perform and allows you to prepare mentally for your training.

Saiyok starts with an easy run of six miles in the morning, interspersed with ten sprints of one hundred yards each. In the afternoon he jogs for three miles with five one-hundred-yard sprints in between. He then follows up with twenty to thirty minutes of skipping rope. Kem begins with a run of one to two hours in the morning. In the afternoon he warms up by skipping rope for twenty minutes. Both athletes add some stretching and loosening-up exercises to the warm-up phase. They choose the exercises based on how tense their muscles are.

## Jogging

You can warm up your muscles with an easy ten-to twenty-minute run. In some Thai gyms the athletes start with an intensive jog of up to ninety minutes. This is possible because the athletes are perfectly trained and their bodies have become used to years of intensive training. If you're not in such good physical condition, divide the technical training and intensive jogging into two training sessions.




## Skipping Rope

Skipping rope is also a sensible way to warm up. It's best to use a heavy plastic rope. This will strengthen your hand, arm, neck, and shoulder muscles. Jump for ten minutes, taking breaks to move your head and swing your arms. As an advanced athlete you can extend your rope-skipping to fifteen to twenty minutes without a break. Vary your jump style and pace.



## Stretching and Loosening Up

The warm-up program should include some stretching exercises. It's best to briefly stretch all muscle groups, with more intensity on your weak points. Make sure that you can get into a position carefully, and don't hold it for more than ten seconds. After that, you can loosen your joints and swing your arms and legs.





# 3. Main Techniques Training

In the main part of the training session, you practice attacking techniques and their combinations as well as defense and counter techniques. The training session includes shadowboxing, pad training, punching bag training, partner training, and clinching, not necessarily in that order. Advanced athletes extend their training sessions with rounds of sparring.

## Shadowboxing

In shadowboxing, you train your techniques and fight tactics in the air. Be careful not to overextend your joints, and don't let down your guard. Act as if you were facing a real opponent. Move toward your opponent and dodge. Use attacking techniques, and defend and counter against the techniques of your imaginary opponent. Shadowboxing can also be done in front of a mirror.

In the course of fight preparation, shadowboxing will be

adjusted to the fight style of the next upcoming opponent. Thai boxers imagine their opponents fighting in their usual style in a match, and they work on their own fight tactics while shadowboxing. If, for example, your upcoming opponent is known to use a powerful straight punch from behind, you would repeatedly train in kicks to the upper arm and knee kicks to the rear of the body.

## Tips from Saiyok and Kem

- Shadowbox as if you were in a real fight.
- Move swiftly, with power and concentration.
- Use all the techniques you know.





Saiyok trains in shadowboxing for relatively long periods. Each training session contains three or four rounds of four minutes each. Kem is satisfied with one round of five minutes.

## Pad Training

In pad training, you practice each technique against a handheld pad to develop a sense of distance and timing for use in competition. Pay attention to correct technical execution, a stable stance, balance, and your guard. Take your time and avoid rash moves. The trainer attacks your defense by hitting the pads gently against the gaps in your guard. The power and pace depend on the trainer's instructions. Techniques are initially trained in individually, and later in combination. A combination will frequently be repeated in the course of one round.

In fight preparation, the trainer simulates different situations and fight styles. For example, the trainer can apply pressure by repeatedly moving toward the fighter, who must stop the trainer with his or her techniques. The trainer can also use attacking techniques to develop the athlete's counters. In this way the trainer teaches the Thai boxer the fight tactics required for the next competition.

## Tips from Kem

- Emulate the pad training of champion fighters.
- Always train as if it were a real fight.
- Remain active and train at 100 percent.





Saiyok trains on pads for three to five rounds, and Kem does four to six rounds. The rounds last four minutes each. Both athletes also use combinations and repeat them several times.

## Punching Bag Training

By training on a punching bag, you develop stamina and power as well as hardening your body. Try to deliver each punch, push, or kick with maximum hardness. In the process, pay attention to technically correct execution.

Avoid any rash moves and use the right timing. Train with combinations, but also train by instinct. The trainer watches and gives instructions, such as the use of certain techniques, in order to change behavior patterns.

It is best to train on a big, heavy bag so that you can deliver all techniques with power. Inexperienced athletes initially use a bag with soft filling such as fabric. Experienced athletes use a bag with a hard filling such as wood shavings in order to harden the body as well.

For fight preparation, the trainer determines some combinations that are suitable against the fight style of the upcoming opponent. The Thai boxer has to train in these combinations time and again so that they can be applied instinctively in a fight.

## Tips from Saiyok

- Use all the techniques you know, and also make use of combinations.
- Always stay on the move.
- Train with the full use of your power.





Saiyok and Kem train on a punching bag with similar intensity: four or five rounds of four minutes each.

## Partner Training and Sparring

Professional Thai athletes frequently carry out partner training and sparring in combination. In Western gyms, however, there is a clear separation of the two.

### *Partner Training*

When training with a partner you practice controlled attacks, defense, and counters to develop a feeling for distance and timing. The techniques and counters are agreed on ahead of time and carried out with little power

so as to avoid injuries. For example, the attacker delivers a straight punch from the front, which the defender deflects to the inside and subsequently counters. The technique is repeated a number of times before the positions are reversed. You can also practice free partner training: one of the partners only attacks, and the other defends and counters. In pad training, watch your timing and coordination. The techniques must be delivered in a controlled way; otherwise the defender will tense up and use only familiar techniques.

For fight preparation, train in techniques tailored to your next opponent. If that person is known for aggressive moves, train in counters to stop the attacks or to deflect them sideways.

## *Sparring*

Advanced athletes add free sparring to their training. The emphasis is on free training in defense and counter techniques, so the techniques are not agreed on ahead of time. This simulates real fight conditions. Concentrate on the sparring session, but don't fight at full strength. The trainer must watch the athletes and correct mistakes. The techniques that may be used are determined beforehand. For example, if you need to practice protecting your head, you might only train in boxing sparring.

# Tips from Saiyok and Kem

- Train swiftly and with concentration.
- Train with a sporting spirit and don't apply much power.
- Use sparring to test techniques.
- Don't be nervous; stick to your fight style.







For intensive sparring, you should wear protective equipment. In Thai gyms the athletes often train with little contact and go without protective equipment. If they train with more power, however, Thai athletes also use protective gear.

For fight preparation, choose a training partner whose fight style is as similar as possible to your next opponent. When sparring, your partner imitates your upcoming opponent's fight style. The training athlete must follow the fight tactics determined by the trainer.

Saiyok and Kem include partner training and sparring in each training session. Saiyok trains with a partner for thirty minutes in the morning and for sixty minutes in the afternoon. He spars with 50–70 percent of his power and practices sparring exclusively one time per week. Kem trains with a partner for fifteen to twenty minutes in each session and uses 70–80 percent of his maximum strength. Sparring is on the agenda twice per week.

## Clinching

Clinch training is carried out at the end of technical training. Clinch training covers gripping, holding, and improving the clinch position. The boxer targets strikes and throws on the training partner, using little power and without a full range of movement. You will improve your stamina and strength, particularly the strength of your

neck muscles. Strong neck muscles are important for a fighter to resist impacts. Make sure that your body is upright, and carry out the techniques in a controlled way. As a novice, clinch with little strength; concentrate on learning the techniques.

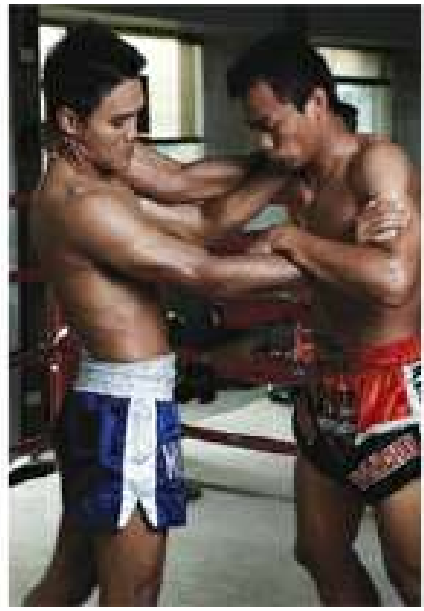
For fight preparation, holding and improving the clinch position is trained in at full strength. Only knee kicks are used. This type of clinch is important and is trained in at length in Thai camps.

The clinch is an important aspect of Kem's fight style, and he trains in clinching for twenty to thirty minutes in each training session. He uses 80–90 percent of his power and usually trains with two or three partners. Saiyok does not clinch much in his competitions as he has a greater advantage in other fight distances. He trains in clinching for twenty minutes four times a week. He trains at about 70 percent of his power and makes sure to use a variety of techniques.

## Tips from Kem

- Make sure your stance is stable.
- Train clinching intensively.
- Clinch with tall, heavy partners.







# 4. Cooling-Down Phase

Initially, the cooling-down phase usually includes some strength exercises. The training session is concluded by cooling the body down with an easy jog, stretching, and loosening up. A massage also helps with regeneration.

## Strength Training

Pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, and neck pulls are frequently used to invigorate the body. It also makes sense to do exercises for the muscles of the lower back. Do many repetitions with the goal of improving strength and endurance. If you are planning to increase your muscle mass significantly, however, your training sessions must be exclusively dedicated to building your strength.

## An Easy Jog

You can jog at an easy pace for a few minutes. This loosens your muscles and helps your body to regenerate.

### Important Strength Exercises

- Pull-ups

  Saiyok: 4 to 5 sets × 20 repetitions

  Kem: 10 sets × 15 repetitions

- Push-ups

  Saiyok: 10 sets × 20 repetitions; he does his push-ups in between pad and punching bag training.

  Kem: 1 set × 100 repetitions

- Sit-ups

  Saiyok: 3 sets × 100 repetitions

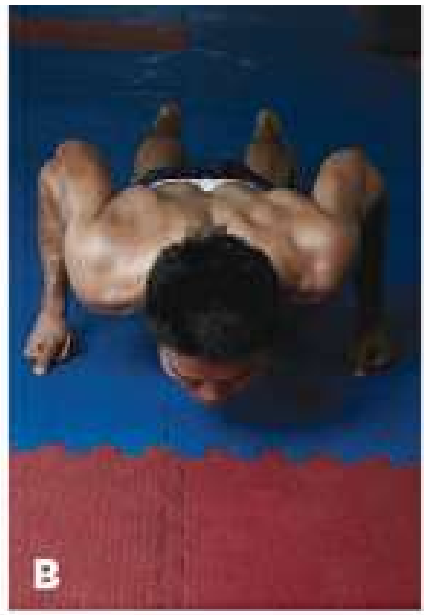
  Kem: 2 to 3 sets × 100 repetitions

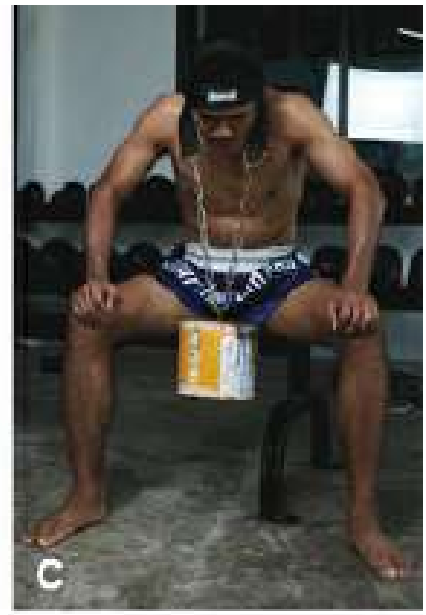
- Neck pulls

  Many repeats; no specific requirements

**A–D:** *Pull-ups, push-ups, neck pulls, and sit-ups.*







## Stretching and Loosening Up

At the end you can do some light stretching and loosening up. This helps in relieving tension and prevents shortening of the muscles. Take positions with only a little

stretching tension and hold them for a few seconds. Loosen the joints, for example, with head turns and arm swings.



Kem is convinced that it is best for Thai boxers to develop their power in training specific to the sport. He recommends that pad and punching bag training should be carried out at full strength, and to do a lot of running. Saiyok concentrates primarily on his strength, with intensive training specific to the sport. He also recommends sprint training. Both athletes carry out some strengthening exercises after their training in techniques, but they haven't planned any special sessions to improve their strength. Above all, they train in body-weight

exercises such as pull-ups, push-ups, and sit-ups. Occasionally they include neck pulls and dumbbell exercises with many repetitions and small weights.

# 5. Regeneration

In training, the greatest possible improvement in performance is achieved when you have chosen the optimum relationship between physical exertion and regeneration time. The amount of time it is sensible to train—and subsequently, how long you should rest between training sessions—depend on many factors, including the intensity of training, your progress in performance, how regenerative measures are taken, and nutrition. Remember that in Muay Thai the body is trained in many areas, among them technical performance, strength, and stamina. Fighters must also consider reducing the amount of body fat or muscle mass to be able to enter competitions in their optimum weight class.

As a leisure-time or amateur athlete, you should train twice or three times a week. It is best to take a one-day break before the next session. It is also necessary to sleep an extra hour the night after a training session. Professional athletes have to improve their performance according to their individual training plans. If you train twice a day, it is suggested you take an extra break at midday, as is common in Thai camps. Other measures can accelerate regeneration, including massages and hot baths.

When you compare your training plan with the plans of professional athletes, bear in mind that they have been building up the performance level of their bodies in a continuous process. If you regularly overexert your body, your performance will stagnate and you will face a greater risk of injury.

Saiyok and Kem pay close attention to their bodies. They endure a heavy training workload to be in top form for their competitions. Both athletes are careful to get enough sleep: six to eight hours at night and two to three hours at midday. They don't go out partying and don't participate in extensive leisure-time activities. To accelerate the regeneration of their bodies, they treat themselves to *nuat*, Thai therapeutic massage. Kem also takes care of his body using warm herbal balls.




**The three champions Armin, Saiyok, and Nonsai.**

# 6. Nutrition

Correct nutrition is necessary for good performance in training and continuous improvement. There should be no deficiencies in your eating, because you will not be able to build up muscle, will feel tired, and will be more prone to injury and infection.

As a competitor you have to make sure that you don't eat more than your body requires, because that will increase your body fat and you won't be able to compete

in the weight class best suited to you.

Find a balance of foods tailored to your requirements, which depend on your athletic activities and the basic needs of your body. The more you succeed with the proper diet, the more success you'll have in your training. Be aware of what you eat, and pay attention to how the body reacts to changes in your diet. The following sections contain details on the established basics, which you can use to plan your diet.

## Nutrition Basics

The following guidelines outline what you should be eating.

### *A High Proportion of Complex Carbohydrates*

The major part of your diet should be carbohydrates, which are contained in, for example, potatoes, noodles, and bread. Eat as many whole-grain products as possible. As much as possible, stay away from the simple sugars contained in sweet foods. The amount of carbohydrates you need depends on your physical activities and training targets. If you are satisfied with your ratio of body fat and you feel fit in training, you have found the appropriate diet. If you want to reduce body fat, first try to cut down on saturated fatty acids before you start reducing carbohydrate intake.

## *Low-Fat Protein Products*

For your protein intake, eat low-fat products such as cottage cheese, egg whites, tuna, and lean beef. Whey also has a high proportion of protein and is low in fat. It is sold as a powder in specialized fitness stores and in some pharmacies. It is especially important to advanced athletes for building muscle.

## *Minimize Saturated Fatty Acids*

Try to keep to a low-fat diet. Saturated fatty acids should be avoided, so stay away from sausages, fatty cheese and meat, butter, and margarine, as they frequently contain a lot of saturated fatty acids. You should also avoid consuming the fats used in deep frying.

Simple unsaturated fatty acids and polyunsaturated acids, however, are indispensable. Eat plenty of fish and nuts, and use high-quality oils such as sunflower oil, canola oil, and olive oil.

## *A Varied Diet*

Food contains many different ingredients, and it's important to eat a varied diet. Eat fruit and vegetables on a daily basis, and change the ones you eat. If that's not possible, or if you dislike eating large portions of uncooked food, use vitamin and mineral food supplements. You might also need these supplements when you're on an intensive training program or losing weight. In these cases, make sure you're getting vitamin C,

magnesium, calcium, zinc, and selenium.

### *At Least Two Quarts of Water*

Drink plenty of fluids: a minimum of two quarts per day. If you sweat a lot, work out hard, or are on a low-calorie diet, you have to drink even more. Water is best as it contains no calories. Alcoholic beverages don't maintain your water balance, as they cause excessive urination and greater loss of water. Alcohol also has a negative impact on the body and doesn't supply any nutrients.

## Suggestions for Your Diet

Many Thai boxers have come to the conclusion that it makes sense to split food consumption into three main meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That doesn't mean that you should have three large portions of food; spread your food intake through the day and make sure that the total quantity that you eat corresponds to your daily requirements. It is also sensible to have a small snack between breakfast and lunch and one in the afternoon. Dinner should be early in the evening. You can then have another small snack after two or three hours.

The optimum composition of your main meals depends on your lifestyle, your training targets, and your training timetable. Consciously controlling your eating habits will show what is good for you. Changes in nutrition should only be made in steps, not with radical shifts. This will allow you to determine how your body reacts to the changes.

Fruits, vegetables, and protein snacks are recommended for in-between meals. Sweets should be avoided, as you will soon feel hungry again.

## Suggested Eating Plans

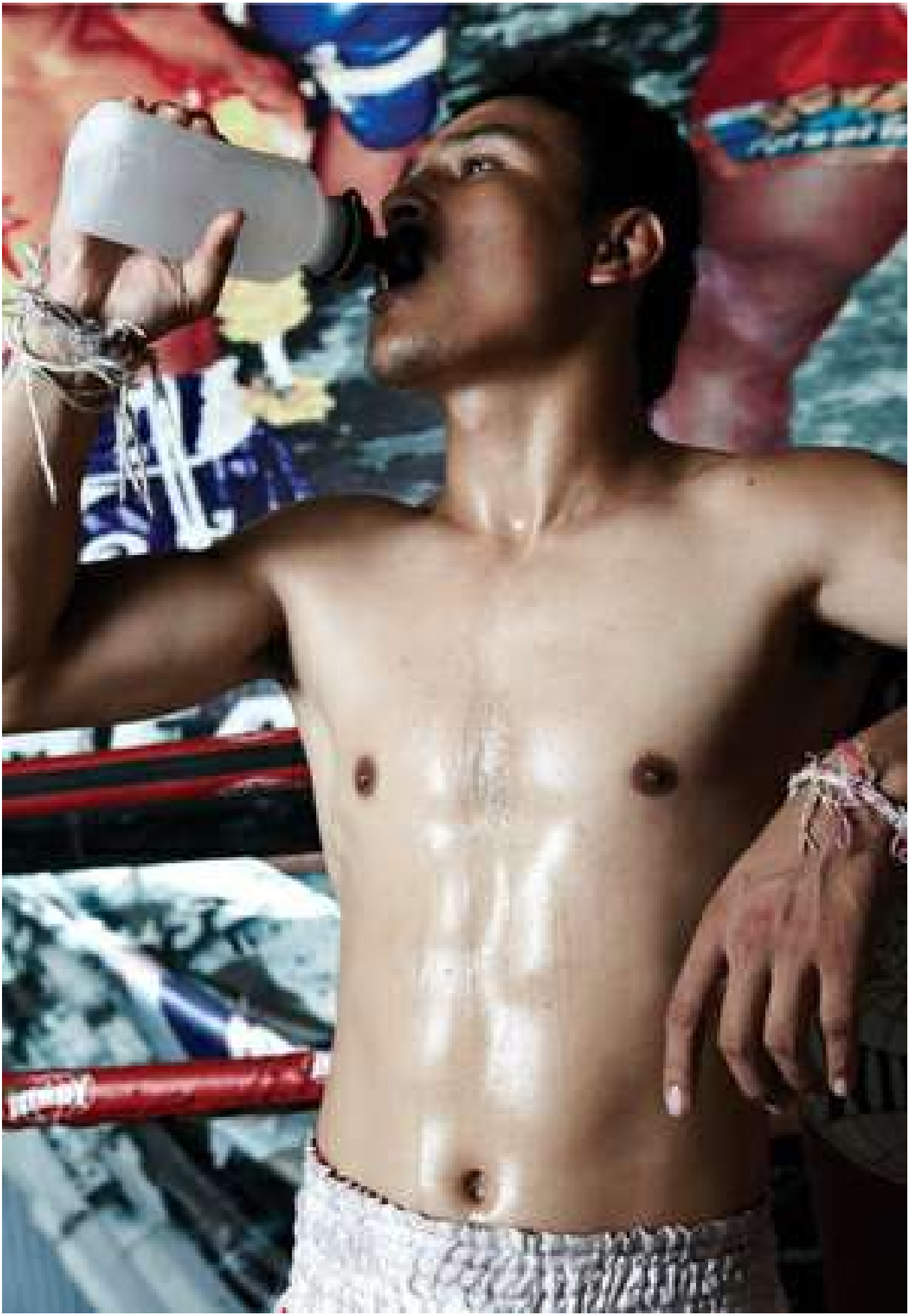
| Food | Suggested eating plan: no training | Suggested eating plan: training 5–7 p.m. | Suggested eating plan: training 9–11 a.m. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Breakfast | 7 a.m. | 7 a.m. | 6:30 or 7 a.m. |
| Morning Snack | 10 a.m. | 10:30 a.m. | ❄ |
| Lunch | 12:30 p.m. | 1 p.m. | 11:30 a.m. or noon |
| Afternoon Snack | 3:30 p.m. | 4 p.m. | 3 p.m. |
| Dinner | 6 p.m. | 7:30 or 8 p.m. | 5:30 p.m. |
| Evening Snack | 8 p.m. | ❄ | 8 p.m. |

Kem has his three main meals daily at 9:30 a.m., 1 p.m., and 7 p.m. He eats predominantly Thai food with lots of vegetables and likes papaya salad. He eats nearly no sweets and drinks a minimum of two quarts of water. It is well known that Kem drinks a Pepsi thirty minutes before a fight. If the beverage is not available, he won't compete.

Saiyok, on the other hand, has only two meals a day: one at 11 a.m. and one at 8 p.m. He eats predominantly Thai food and lots of vegetables. He accumulates the necessary amount of protein by eating plenty of fish and two or three eggs every day. He drinks milk, a little water, and no alcohol. He also advises other athletes not to smoke.

Saiyok and Kem use electrolyte drinks, but they don't

take any food supplements or muscle enhancers.



Saiyok uses water and electrolyte drinks while training.

# 7. Selecting Your Weight Class

To be eligible for Muay Thai competition, you and your trainer must determine your weight division and then concentrate your training at this weight. Several factors have to be considered in determining the best-suited weight division, such as your current weight, your percentage of body fat, your fight style, and the competitive conditions.

Your percentage of body fat should be as low as possible. It is typically 8–10 percent for professional male Thai boxing athletes, and somewhat higher for female athletes. The percentage of body fat can also be higher in amateurs, who don't face the same physical demands. A high proportion of fat means that an athlete is not fully trained. The athlete will then compete in a higher weight division, where the opponents will be stronger. In this situation, athletes can compete only if they are technically clearly superior.

If a Muay Thai fighter's body fat is 15 percent, it can be reduced to about 6 percent through intensive training and the correct nutrition. At a weight of 170 pounds, this means a reduction in body fat of 10 pounds without a loss of performance. Further slimming can be achieved only by reducing muscle mass, which leads to less strength and deterioration in performance. Experience shows that it

gets progressively more difficult to lose body fat as you get closer to the optimal area. It's easier to achieve a reduction from 15 percent to 13 percent, for example, than from 12 percent to 10 percent.

If you want to keep track of your body's development, check your weight, percentage of body fat, and measurements at regular intervals. Measure the size of your upper arms, chest, waist, hips, thighs, and calves, as they show the clearest changes. The aim is to achieve a narrower waist while the other parts increase in size. Accordingly, examine your waist at its narrowest point and all the other parts at their largest point. Record the results on a checklist.

## Nutritional Objective: Maintaining Fight Weight

If you want to improve your Muay Thai performance while maintaining your fight weight, you have to make sure that your calorie intake corresponds more or less to the calories you burn. This applies equally to Muay Thai–specific training, stamina training, and power training. Eat healthy food such as lean meat, fish, whole-grain products, fruits, fresh vegetables, and essential fats.

Don't exercise on an empty stomach. Consume sufficient carbohydrates and protein. It's best to eat a main meal about three hours before training and to eat a carbohydrate-rich snack, such as a banana, about an hour before you start. You will then be able to bring your best performance during training. It is also worthwhile to eat a

fitness bar in the course of a very intensive training session, and to drink lots of fluids, such as mineral water. After a training session, concentrate on foods rich in carbohydrates and protein so that the body receives the nutrients it requires for regeneration.

## Nutritional Objective: Reducing Fight Weight

If you want to reduce body fat to be able to compete in a lower weight division, you have to add many stamina and power training sessions to your Muay Thai–specific training. Your calorie intake must be less than the calories you burn. To be sure that you don't reduce muscle mass with this effort, you have to sharply increase the proportion of protein you eat along with a corresponding reduction in carbohydrates. Aim for low-fat foods but don't neglect the valuable fats. It is also essential to drink plenty of fluids.

Two or three hours before training, eat food rich in protein, such as a protein shake, and one or two hours before training, eat food rich in carbohydrates, such as a banana. This is especially important before power training; otherwise you'll feel drained. After a training session, eat foods rich in carbohydrates and protein, but not excessive carbohydrates, as they can offset the calorie-burning effect of training. Don't abstain from carbohydrates completely, as that would have a negative effect on the protein in the muscles.

## Nutritional Objective: Increasing Fight Weight

If you want to significantly increase your muscle mass to be able to enter a higher weight division, you will have to add rigorous muscle-building training to the Muay Thai–specific training. To avoid training excessively, you will have to reduce the Muay Thai–specific training sessions. You must also increase your food intake, specifically the amount of protein. To avoid increasing your proportion of body fat, aim for low-fat nutrition. This will not lead to a fat deficiency, as eating a larger volume of food will also increase the amount of fat you're getting.

Two or three hours before power training, have a meal rich in protein—for example, a protein shake with oatmeal—and one or two hours before training, have a carbohydrate-rich snack such as a fitness bar. During training, drink plenty of fluids. Eating a protein bar is also a good idea so that the protein is available to your body immediately after training. After the training session, start to replenish your carbohydrate levels and at the same time consume more protein. You should also eat plenty of protein-rich foods on days when you don't do power training so that your body gets sufficient protein for muscle development.


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**Nonsai practices chin-ups (Muay Thai Plaza Gym, Bangkok).**


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**Saiyok and Armin practice clinch training.**



**The world champion Kem Sitsongpeenong (Bangkok, 2012).**

Chapter 3

# Solo Training

## 1. Background

In Muay Thai, you can achieve lofty goals if you have the best possible training in all facets of your physical performance. To achieve this, the training in techniques provided in a club isn't enough; additional individual training will help you to reduce your weaknesses and make you a better Thai boxer.

Many individuals are not interested in joining a club but want to train in Thai boxing techniques on a punching bag by themselves to stay fit and reduce stress. Even as a beginner you can achieve good training results with sensibly planned training.

The following pages outline the basics of individual training. Thai boxers develop workouts aimed at eliminating weak points and other exercises to effectively improve their performance levels. Beginners also learn the important basics required to organize their individual Muay Thai training. You can use solo training for long-term effective training of your body in martial arts and

fitness sessions, regardless of whether you are a fitness-oriented athlete or an active Muay Thai boxer.



The author demonstrates the Khow Loy (Flying Knee).

# Equipment

For individual training in Thai boxing techniques, you'll need bandages, punching bag gloves, and training equipment on which you can practice the techniques. In shadowboxing you can certainly carry out the techniques in the air, but to make progress in training, the body also needs to feel resistance. It's also fun to burn off energy on the punching bag. For training in techniques with a partner, you'll need protective equipment (see the book *Muay Thai Basics*).

To avoid injury to your hand and finger joints, you need **bandages** for training on equipment such as the punching bag and the speedball. You can buy two short standard tapes from specialty stores; they start at about $8. You also need **punching bag gloves;** acceptable-quality versions can be obtained from specialty stores starting at about $40.

A **punching bag** helps to develop strength and stamina in your technical execution. Simple models, about three feet in size, are filled with pieces of fabric and cost about $70 and up. Advanced Thai boxers use a heavy punching bag, available for about $140.

A **maize bag** can be used for training in fist, elbow, and high kicking techniques. It's better to buy this kind of bag, with maize filling, from a specialty retailer. Make sure that the filling is not too soft. A filled bag made of synthetic leather will cost about $90.

# Strength Training Equipment

The strength exercises in this book don't require any expensive purchases. You need a jump rope, an exercise ball, and dumbbells. It also makes sense to buy a chin-up bar that can be mounted in a door frame.

The **jump rope** can be used for warming up and stamina training. A simple model is available for about $15. The **exercise ball** is used in some exercises for intensive stimulation of muscle interaction. If you don't have a ball, you can start training without it. Balls in different sizes are sold by specialty retailers for about $15. For training it is recommended to use a set of two **dumbbells** with different weight plates. They can be bought in department stores for about $20. It's best to buy dumbbells with the plates mounted with star-shaped nuts. For pull-up training you can buy a **chin-up bar**. Simple bars can be mounted in a door frame and are available at specialty stores for about $30.


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Nonsai Sor Sanyakorn in his gym. Muay Thai Plaza, Bangkok 2012.

## Important Tips: Hardening the Body

Your body has to get used to the contact in Muay Thai. Hardening, particularly of the shinbones, knees, and elbows, results from training on punching bags, pads, and with a partner.

If you want to accelerate the hardening effects, you can do so by continually increasing the hardness of your punching bag. It's not a good idea, however, to hit, push, and kick against solid, inflexible objects. Do not use hot water to reduce sensation in your nerves; this can result in serious injuries.

As filling for your punching bag, get some wood shavings from a carpenter. You'll need two to three trash bags full of wood shavings, and a carpenter is likely to charge you about $5 per bag. After a few months you can start adding some fine sand, such as sand from a quarry pond. That way the bag will gradually get harder, and your body will get accustomed to the hardness. After some regular training, you can take out some of the wood shavings and replace them with even more sand.

It must be said, though, that few Thai fighters train on a bag completely filled with sand. Any technique carried out in the wrong way on a bag full of sand runs a substantial risk of injury. An alternative to filling the bag with wood shavings is to use shredded rubber material, like recycled car tires; this might be difficult to find, however.



# 2. Basic Techniques

The following pages discuss the Muay Thai techniques that need to be learned first. Practice the techniques in shadowboxing and on a punching bag. You can watch the techniques on the DVD *Muay Thai: Basic Techniques* (2012). If you have already learned other techniques at a club, you can add these to the kata (see "Forms Derived from the Basic Techniques," this page) or to the "Workouts" in chapter 6.

## The Fight Stance

All techniques originate from the fight stance. Take your position with an upright stance, your feet parallel to each other and shoulder-width apart. Right-handed practitioners move the left foot forward and turn the right foot about forty-five degrees to the side. The opposite applies for the left-handed. In the stance, you rest on the balls of your feet with the rear heel somewhat raised. Keep your body upright and turn it slightly forward and to the side. At the same time, bend your chin slightly toward your chest. Keep your front hand up on the level of your eyebrows, and your rear hand above your chin. Your muscles are relaxed, especially in the shoulders. Target your opponent's central body with your eyes. Don't concentrate on only one point, but try to look at the

whole body. That way you can see best which technique your opponent will use next. At close distances, watch the head to detect possible action at the earliest possible moment.



Kem (in blue) is right-handed and thus fights in a conventional stance, with his left hand in front. Saiyok (in red) demonstrates the southpaw stance.

## Important Tips: Training for the Eyes and Steps

This exercise helps to improve the feeling of distance, defense, and side steps. Practice side steps with a change of stance and evasive moves until they become natural and you don't have to think about them.

Fix your gaze on object, such as a bolt or a piece of string (here we used a bandage). Secure the string high enough so that the object is at head height. Push the object slightly away from you. Whenever it comes back, take a step forward to the left or right. Then move back to your original position. It's important not to take overly small steps and to keep your balance. Athletes with a conventional stance change their stance by moving the right foot forward. Southpaws change the stance with a step to the left.

**A–C:** *Push, semicircle to the right, and semicircle to the left.*

*Between each semicircle move, take the center position. Wait until the piece of string swings back to you before you make the next move.*

**D:** *You can also train your feeling for distance in elbow and fist techniques with the object.*



A



B



C



D

# Important Tips: Visualizing Targets and Techniques

In training, always imagine exactly where the target is and how you can hit it with your technique. Think, for example, how a side elbow makes contact with the jaw, how an uppercut hits the chin from below, and how a knee kick hits the body. Imagination is especially useful in shadowboxing and punching bag training, and it is also good for solo training. By visualizing the point of impact for your technique, you learn to act consciously and to tense your muscles at the right moment.

Another good exercise is to visualize complete technical processes, first at a slow pace and then increasingly faster. In the case of a straight punch from the rear, visualize how you slightly push off from your rear foot and how you step forward with your front foot. Next, move your fist to the front while your elbow remains down for as long as possible. Your rear foot, hips, and body turn along with the motion. Shortly before impact, turn your fist and hit with your knuckles from slightly above downward.

Visualize your defense positions, counter

techniques, and feints as well. It is best to imagine a system made up of defense and counter techniques against all possible attacks. By initially visualizing and memorizing the flow of movements, it will be easier to do them perfectly in reality. You will also learn conscious and thus effective shadowboxing. Details on the correct process for all important techniques can also be seen in the Muay Thai DVD series (2012–2013).




## Technique 1: Straight Punch (Mat Throng)

The straight punch with the front fist is used as preparation for techniques, and its aim is to upset the opponent's timing. The rear fist delivers a powerful punch. The straight punch can target the nose, chin, or

eyes. A powerful straight punch from the rear can also be delivered to the stomach and the solar plexus. An explosive execution of the punch is important.

- From the fight stance, step forward with your front foot and punch in a straight line to the target.
- Keep your elbow down for as long as possible. The other fist remains above the jaw for protection.
- Turn your hips and shoulder and shift your weight to the front.
- Your fist should be turned down shortly before impact.
- Subsequently, your fist returns quickly to its original position.



**A:** *Saiyok demonstrates the front straight punch coming from a southpaw stance.*



**B:** *The rear straight punch.*

## Technique 2: Side Hook (Mat Weang Sun)

The rear fist and the front fist can deliver powerful side

hooks. You can target the jaw or the temples. A heavy blow will numb your opponent or even render him unconscious. The lower ribs and the liver are also good targets.

- From the fight stance, step forward with your front foot and shorten your distance.
- Some fighters also step slightly sideways with their rear foot before they deliver a side hook from the rear. This improves your balance, but the hook clearly requires more time.
- Shift your weight to the leg on the active side of your body, and turn the upper side of your body slightly to the side.
- Raise your fist. The other fist remains above your jaw.
- Carry out a lateral stroke. Your body and hips turn along with the move and put your weight behind it.
- Quickly return your fist to the original position.



**A:** *Nonsai demonstrates the front side hook from a conventional stance.*



**B:** *The rear side hook.*

## Technique 3: Uppercut (Mat Ngad)

It is possible to deliver a powerful uppercut with the front

or rear fist. It is rather difficult to deliver the stroke to the chin, but if you can, it is very effective. At close distances the uppercut hook is often carried out to the body, specifically to the ribs and the solar plexus.

Complete the hook on the way up and make sure that you hit the target with your knuckles. On a punching bag you can only suggest an uppercut to the head. The technique is best trained on a maize bag.

- From the fight stance, step forward with your front foot.
- Shift your weight to the foot on your active side and bend your knees slightly.
- Some fighters also move their rear foot slightly to the side before they deliver a rear hook.
- Move your fist slightly down so that your upper arm and lower arm form nearly a right angle. The other fist is kept above your jaw for protection.
- Deliver your fist up with a jerk. Stretch your leg in the process and turn along your foot, hips, and shoulder. Shift your weight to the front.
- Quickly return your fist to the original position.




**A:** *The front uppercut from a southpaw stance.*



**B:** *The rear uppercut.*

## Technique 4: Rotating Elbow (Sok Tee)

The rotating elbow can be carried out with the front or

rear elbow. It is usually aimed at the forehead, nasal bone, or eyebrows.

Carry out the technique so that you complete the elbow motion when you miss the target. To achieve this, your hand will go through below the armpit of your other arm.

- From the fight stance, step forward with your front foot.
- Move one elbow sideways to the top. Your fist on the other side of your body stays above your jaw. Your weight is evenly distributed on both legs.
- Deliver your elbow to the target downward from above. Turn along with your upper body and hips and shift your weight to the front.
- Quickly return to the fight position.



**A:** *The rotating elbow from the front, coming from a southpaw stance.*



**B:** *The rotating elbow from the rear.*

## Technique 5: Side Elbow (Sok Tad)

The side elbow can be carried out with the front or rear

elbow. The technique is usually aimed at the center of the jaw. The temples, the nasal bone, and the solar plexus can also bit hit effectively, but they are more difficult to hit with this technique. Make sure that you make impact with the tip of your elbow.

Carry out this technique so that you complete the elbow motion when you miss the target. Your hand will pass on the outside of your arm that is raised for protection.

- Start the technique by stepping forward with your front foot.
- Raise one arm to shoulder height. Hold your fist on the other side above your jaw. Your weight is evenly distributed on both legs.
- Deliver your elbow horizontally to the other side. Turn along with your hips and shoulder, and shift your weight to the front.
- Quickly return to the fight position.



**A:** *The front side elbow.*



**B:** *The rear side elbow.*

## Technique 6: Round Kick (Te Tad)

The round kick is delivered to the lower ribs, upper arm,

jaw, temples, or upper legs. Perform the kick as if you were kicking through an object. Impact is made with the shinbone.

- For a kick with the rear leg, move your front foot to the side so that your toes are pointing out at about forty-five degrees.
- For a kick with your front leg, you first have to change your stance. Initially move your rear foot forward to the side, or jump back with your front foot.
- Kick in a semicircle arc and use your hips and weight. The load will be shifted to the front, and your pivot leg turns along with the move to the outside.
- Stretch your kicking leg on impact.
- After the kick, quickly return your leg to the fight stance.



**A:** *The round kick with the front leg.*



**B:** *The round kick from the rear.*

## Technique 7: Push Kick (Teep Trong)

The push kick is usually aimed at the stomach or thighs. It

is also possible to hit the solar plexus, chest, chin, or face. Impact is made with the ball of the foot, the heel, or the entire foot. The front foot is used for rapid kicks, the rear foot for powerful kicks.

- For delivery with your front foot, shift your weight to your rear leg.
- For a kick with your rear foot, initially move your front foot slightly to the side so that your toes are pointing about forty-five degrees to the outside.
- Pull your knee toward the upper part of your body. Your guard stays up. If you carry out the technique with your rear foot, you also turn forward with the rear part of your upper body.
- Kick in a straight line and use your hip. Your pivot leg turns along with the move to the outside.
- Stretch your kicking leg on impact and lean slightly back with your upper body.
- Quickly return your leg to the fight stance.



**A:** *Saiyok the front push kick from a southpaw stance.*



**B:** *The rear push kick.*

## Technique 8: Straight Knee Kick (Khow Throng)

The straight knee kick can be aimed at the stomach or solar plexus. The technique can also be directed toward

the chin or the nasal bone if your opponent bends down or the kick is carried out in a jump. At close distances, you can grab your opponent around the neck and pull the opponent in. It is important to stretch your knee as far as possible.

- For a technique with your rear leg, step forward with your front foot.
- To knee kick with your front leg, you first have to change the stance. Step forward with your rear foot or jump back with your front foot.
- Deliver the knee kick in a direct line. In the process, your heel is raised and your stretched pivot leg turns along with the move to the outside.
- On impact, move your hip forward and lean back with your upper body. Pay attention to your guard.
- Quickly return to your fight stance.



**A:** *The front knee kick.*



**B:** *The rear knee kick.*

# Forms Derived from the Basic

# Techniques

These days, forms, also called kata, are used for training in Muay Thai. The forms are not traditional and clearly defined, however, which means that trainers can develop their own forms. When organizing the forms, it is important that all basic techniques are trained in.

This section introduces a kata made up of basic techniques that must be learned first in Muay Thai. You can use the form after your general warm-up exercises and before technical training. If you've already mastered other attacking techniques, you can add them.

**Execution:** Train the kata in front of a mirror and correct your techniques in the process. Perform all the techniques in succession in the air, initially at a slow pace, and then faster and faster for as long as it takes you to master the kata quickly and without interruption. Be mindful of the correct use of each technique. Advanced athletes can carry out the complete form in one minute, and they also train in it on a punching bag.

1. Front and rear straight punch to the head
2. Front and rear side hook to the head
3. Front and rear uppercut to the head
4. Rotating elbow to the head from the front and rear
5. Front and rear side elbow to the head
6. Low kick from the front and rear
7. Round kick to the body from the front and rear

8. Round kick to the head from the front and rear
9. Front and rear push kick to the leg
10. Front and rear push kick to the body
11. Front and rear push kick to the head
12. Straight knee kick to the body from the front and rear



# 3. Stretching and Loosening

A flexible body is necessary to be able to carry out Muay Thai techniques. You don't need extraordinary agility for Muay Thai, however. There is no need, for example, to do the splits. The term *stretching* covers the targeted execution of exercises required to improve agility. This means slowly assuming a position where you experience a slight stretching sensation in your muscles. In that position, you then improve your agility by doing a stretching method.

Stretching improves agility, helps reduce restrictions in agility, and supports posture and body perception. Alternatives to these stretching exercises can be found in the book *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters* (2006).

## Important Tips: Organizing Muay Thai Training

- Start training with a warm-up exercise such as, for example, skipping rope. Train in the exercise for approximately ten minutes, but do it at low intensity and avoid extreme strain and complex jumping patterns.
- If you feel your muscles are strained or stiff, or if your movement is restricted in specific muscles,

for example your inner thigh muscles, you can do targeted static stretching exercises. Don't hold a stretch position for more than ten seconds, and subsequently reactivate your performance potential with rapid movements and rotation of the joints. Some Thai boxers intensify that part of their preparation; other athletes completely go without it. Decide on your approach depending on how your muscles feel.

- Perform swinging movements in preparation for the requirements of Muay Thai. These include, for example, moves like arm swings while rotating your body. Leg swings are recommended to prepare for high kicks. Alternately, you can also carry out the basic techniques of Thai boxing several times and increase your radius of motion each time, for example for kicking height.
- Now you can train your Muay Thai techniques, followed by some strength training.
- If you didn't find the training overly intensive, you can add one to three intensive stretching exercises for muscle groups where you want to achieve better mobility. If the training in techniques has been exhausting, however, it is best not to do intensive stretching exercises and to avoid injury due to putting excessive demands on the muscles.

- To cool down the body, do an exercise at low intensity for about five minutes. This could include slow jogging or relaxed rope-skipping.
- Finish the training with a few static stretching exercises for stressed muscles. You should not, however, assume any intensive stretch positions, and you should not hold the stretch positions for more than ten seconds.

## Application

Stretch in preparation for training in Muay Thai techniques and afterward to accelerate the process of regeneration. Well-developed flexibility in the shoulders, hips, and inner and back leg muscles is important in Muay Thai. If these groups of muscles are too short, you should concentrate additional training sessions exclusively on stretching. If you don't have the time for additional sessions, you can do some static stretching exercises at the end of a Muay Thai training session. Concentrate on the groups of muscles that you want to improve. An extensive stretching program after an intensive Muay Thai training session isn't useful, as the body is too tired.



## Pre-Stretching: Stretching before Technical Training

Each training sessions starts with a warm-up exercise. Follow with some stretching exercises with routines and methods, depending on your requirements. More than anything, stretching in the warm-up phase prepares you for athletic demands. You can briefly stretch all the muscles groups or train in a short program for the muscle

groups where you have mobility restrictions. These could be the neck and shoulder muscles, for example, or the muscles in the lower back, the hip muscles, the inner and rear leg muscles, and the calf muscles.

Stretching exercises can be done with a static or a dynamic method. You can also follow stretching exercises with dynamic swinging movements such as leg swings. Instead of swings you can perform Thai boxing techniques at low intensity in the air with ever-increasing pace and range of movement.

Prior to a competition it's necessary to do a special warm-up specific to Muay Thai. For example, fighters have to perform a number of techniques in shadowboxing and on the pads to achieve the optimum performance level for competition.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Static or Dynamic Stretching?

In the past many Western Thai boxers used the warm-up phase for a static stretch program covering the whole body. It was assumed that this kind of stretching would ensure that the techniques could be carried out with optimum range of movement, thus improving performance and reducing the risk of injury. Research has now shown that an extensive

static program of stretching prior to practicing Muay Thai lowers muscle tonus and therefore lowers performance potential. It was found, for example, that performance in terms of potential strength and bounce decreases. Some Thai boxers are now convinced that they should completely go without static stretching in their warm-ups and that they should concentrate on dynamic exercises instead. Other Thai boxers don't share that view and ask why they should change their warm-up routines if their years of static stretching have proved to be successful. When deciding on the right stretching method, keep in mind that the scientific research has produced varying results, and that there has not been sufficient research done into agility training.

It is important to use a stretching program in your warm-up that is tailored to your individual requirements. If the warm-up program includes static exercises, don't hold the positions for more than ten seconds. You should also rotate your joints and make some rapid movements after the stretching exercises so that you are ready to perform again.

## Post-Stretching: Stretching after Technique Training

Post-stretching can be divided into two phases: stretching to improve performance, and stretching at the end of the cooling-down period to help the body regenerate and to maintain agility.

## *Stretching to Improve Agility*

Following the main part of the training session, you can do a number of exercises that will improve your agility. Start by stretching while your body is still warmed up. It is best to concentrate on one or two groups of muscles. How much you stretch depends on how much strain you experienced in your training. In a club, these exercises are frequently done with a partner.

Do the stretching exercises using the methods described here. Athletes have a wide variety of experiences with the effectiveness of these exercises; test the methods and use the one that offers the best results for stretching while not overexerting your body. As a matter of principle you should not hold a stretch position for very long because it will lead to poor blood circulation in the muscles, which means the metabolites produced in training will not be flushed as efficiently from the body.

After very intensive main training, you should forgo stretching exercises to improve your performance. The reasons for this are that the body will tend to cramp, there is an increased risk of injury, and it will prolong the regeneration process.

## *Stretching at the End of Training*

To cool down, do a steady, low-intensity exercise, such as a slow jog or skipping rope, for about five minutes. Subsequently you can briefly stretch the muscle groups that were predominantly activated in the main part of your training and that clearly feel tense. This approach helps to "switch off" from training and prevents the muscles from shortening. If your training was very intensive and you feel too tired to stretch, you can postpone the exercises for one to two hours.

In the final phase of training, you should also not hold a stretch position for more than ten seconds. This recommendation follows the current findings in training science in order not to slow down the regeneration process. Furthermore, do each exercise only once; don't do a second set of stretches with extended positions. Important areas for post-stretching that merit specific mention are the muscles of the chest, neck, and calves as well as the front, rear, and inner thigh muscles.

## Stretch Training: Stretching as the Main Objective of Training

You can do separate training sessions to improve your agility. In stretch training you can develop a better feeling for the muscles, and you can get rid of muscle contractions that developed, for example, during one-sided training activities or after injuries. Some Muay Thai techniques require good flexibility in certain muscle groups that you can work on in separate training exercises. Again, you don't have to assume any extreme

stretch positions that exceed the agility required for Muay Thai techniques. Remember that too much agility increases your risk of injury.

Start agility training with a moderate warm-up exercise of about ten minutes. Only a warmed-up body can take on intensive stretch positions. In the main part of the training, concentrate on flexibility and stretch all muscle groups, specifically targeting your weak points and those areas you are focusing on in training. Conclude the stretch training with a cool-down exercise at low intensity for about five minutes. Plan about sixty to ninety minutes for a complete stretch training session, including the warm-up and cool-down phases.

In your agility training you can use all the stretching methods to reach your goals. Stretch your muscles intensively, and hold the stretch position for ten to sixty seconds. Avoid areas of pain in your training. You will see success in your agility training if you stretch intensively at least twice a week.

## Important Tips: Stretch Training

- Choose a program for stretch training that covers all the important muscle groups. Focus specifically on your weak points.
- Stretch intensively: only stretches that come close

to your limit result in better flexibility. If you feel pain, though, you must pull back carefully from the stretch position.

- Use all the stretching methods introduced in this book when training your weak points; varied training leads to the best results.

## Stretching and Loosening-up Exercises

This section provides an overview of stretching and loosening-up exercises that can be used in training. Test them out and choose those that feel best for your muscles.

# Relax-Extend Method

In the **first stretching phase**, carefully assume a position where you experience a minor stretch stimulus. Maintain the position for about twenty seconds and consciously relax your muscles. In pre-stretching and post-stretching, hold for a maximum of ten seconds.

Once you have more experience with stretching, you should stretch based on your own physical sensations rather than holding a stretch for a specific length of time. Stretching tension should decrease somewhat after a short period of time. Even though you may not feel the tension, you should feel comfortable in the position and be able to relax. Should that not be the case, relax slightly and

decrease the tension.

In the **second stretching phase**, intensify the position until you experience a new reaction. Maintain the position for about twenty seconds. The extended position must also be comfortable; otherwise you have to correct it. To finish, carefully move out of the stretch position.

Positions in the static stretching warm-up and cool-down phases should not be held for more than ten seconds. In stretching at the end of training, it's not necessary to do the second stretching phase.

### Execution of Stretching

- Move your muscles slowly into a position where you experience a slight stretching reaction.
- Maintain the position for about twenty seconds in the first phase, and for a maximum of ten seconds in pre- and post-stretching.
- Extend the stretch until you feel new tension. Maintain this position for about twenty seconds, and a maximum of ten seconds in pre-and post-stretching.
- Move carefully out of the stretch position.

## Tense-Relax-Extend Method

In the **first stretching phase**, slowly move into a position where you feel slight stretching tension. Tense the muscle to be stretched with medium intensity against something solid and don't change positions. Depending on the

starting position, it can be a wall, the floor, or a training partner. The tension can also be applied to an imaginary object.

There are different opinions about how long and with what intensity tensioning should be done. One opinion is that tensioning should be done at full intensity for one or two seconds. This entails too much risk of injury, though, and it's also difficult to fully activate the muscle in such a short amount of time. I recommend a stretch at medium intensity for about five seconds, subsequently relaxing the muscle for one to three seconds. The exact amount of time depends on the time your muscles need to relax.

In the **second stretching phase**, intensify the position until you experience a new reaction. Briefly maintain the position before tensing the muscle to be stretched again and relaxing to extend the position. This should be done at least once but can be repeated. Extension of the stretch position will decrease with each exercise until nearly no further extension can be felt.

In principle it can be assumed that the more intensive the stretch tension is and the longer it lasts, the greater the relaxation will be and the more effective subsequent stretching will be.

## Tensioning Muscle Groups

Consciously notice where exactly the stretching

tension can be felt. Next, tense the stimulated muscle group. Tensioning is applied opposite to the direction the body is moved, and the joint doesn't move. If you return the body in the direction of the starting position, it will subsequently be impossible to achieve further extension of the stretch position.

**Execution of Stretching**

- Move the muscles slowly to a position where you feel slight tension.
- In the first phase, tense the muscle to be stretched with medium intensity against a real or imaginary object for about five seconds without changing the joint position.
- Relax the muscle for one to three seconds without changing your position.
- In the second phase, extend the stretch until you experience a new reaction, and maintain this stance for a few seconds.
- Next, repeat the first phase.
- Carefully move out of the stretch.

# Dynamic Stretching Method

Dynamic stretching can be understood as careful rhythmic movements that lead to a position with noticeable

stretching tension that is then quickly abandoned. Some Thai boxers train in rhythmic bouncing with such small steps that you can hardly see their movements.

In the process of dynamic stretching, perform the exercise so that you initially take on slight tension, and from that position repeat the exercise five to ten times while cautiously increasing the extent of your movements each time. Afterward, relax the muscles that were used.

Use dynamic stretching to prepare your body for movements with a large range of motion. Before dynamic stretching exercises you should thoroughly warm up your body, as the method runs the risk of injury by bouncing beyond slight stretching tension. This method is primarily used by advanced athletes who have already a well-developed sense of perception of their bodies.

**Execution of Stretching**

- From a position of slight tension, carry out little bouncing movements to a deeper stretched position, and then return to the original position.
- Carry out five to ten moves while trying to extend the stretch position until you have reached the maximum range of motion.
- Carefully pull out of the stretched position.



**A–B:** *Little bouncing movements to the front.*

# Swing Movements

Some athletes integrate swing movements in their warm-up program as a variant of dynamic stretching. Some Thai boxers even concentrate exclusively on swing movements after warming up the body. Newcomers should first start with some stretching exercises, however, as the excessive radius of a swing runs the risk of injury.

Swing movements are usually done with the legs and the arms. Swing the stretched leg, for example, slightly away from the ground to the top while keeping the muscles as relaxed as possible. Repeat the swing five to ten times while increasing the height and pace. As soon as you have

reached the maximum range of your movements, change to the next exercise.

Perform the **arm swings** laterally to the outside, up, and down. You can also combine lateral arm swings with turning the body.

Perform the **leg swings** to the front, side, and rear. For better balance you can hold onto the back of a chair, which allows you to concentrate on the exercise. Next, you can carry out circular movements with the leg from the inside out and from the outside in.

**Execution**

- Swing a part of the body into a position of slightly stretched tension.
- Carry out five to ten repetitions while trying to extend the range of the movements continuously until you reach your maximum range.
- Continue with the next swing exercise.



**A–B:** *Leg swings to the front.*

# Rotating the Joints

To relax the body, athletes frequently move their joints in circles after the stretching exercises. Moving the head, wrist, shoulder, knee and foot joints is especially important. It is best to do five to ten circles in one direction and then five to ten in the opposite direction.

## Execution

- Stand in an upright position.
- Rotate the joint with medium force.

- Do five to ten repetitions in one direction and then five to ten in the opposite direction.
- Continue with the next exercise.



**A–B:** *Moving the head.*

## Stretching Program

When organizing a stretching program, consider which groups of muscles will primarily be activated. These muscles must be part of the warm-up, cool-down, and stretch training. Generally, you should stretch your weak points intensively but not exclusively. If, for example, the muscles at the back of your leg on the right side are less flexible than those on the left, train both sides, but add one extra cycle for the right side.

Also consider whether to use the program in the course of warming up, cooling down, or for special stretch training. The requirements for a stretching program differ depending on your muscle tension, training goals, and training intensity. Newcomers can use a basic program, but advanced athletes should vary their stretching program according to their different daily requirements.

The following section contains a starting program with exercises for all muscle groups and a stretching program for groups of muscles that tend to contract and frequently become weak points in executing Muay Thai techniques. You can use the full-body program for pre-stretching and individual stretch training. The short program can be used for pre-and post-stretching for Muay Thai training. Use these programs as suggestions, adapting them to your own requirements based on your progress in stretching.

## Guidelines

### Stable Starting Position and Slow Movement

Assume a stable starting position so that you can fully concentrate on stretching. In intense stretching, an unstable stance can make you overstep the best position, resulting in an injury. Find the correct stretching position by moving slowly and carefully; rapid moves can lead to injuries. Next, move out of

the stretch position just as carefully.

## Correct Stretch Position

Your performance level determines your stretching position. Don't attempt to do the same stretching position as your training partner or as shown in this book, but be guided by your own perception; each individual has a different physical configuration. You will also find that your muscle tension varies from day to day. Never try to achieve a stretching position by force. Once you feel pain, you have to pull back from the stretching position promptly, as otherwise the muscle will continue to harden and not relax. Your flexibility will improve only if you get used to relaxed muscles moving slowly to the next stretch position, and if stretching is carried out regularly.

## Consistent Breathing

Once you have found the correct stretching position, concentrate on the muscle to be stretched. Breathe slowly and regularly in the relaxation process, and notice the relaxation in the muscle. Extension of the stretching position is done while exhaling.

# Stretching Program: Full Body

This stretching program is for use in warming up or cooling down and in stretch training. It is designed to stretch all muscle groups with as few exercises as possible.

If you use the stretching program in the warm-up or cool-down phase, you should do the exercises only once and not hold the positions for more than ten seconds. In stretch training you can hold the positions for twenty seconds or even longer. Always stretch the left and right side of your body. Make sure that your breathing is consistent, and concentrate on and relax the muscles you're working on.

1. Stretching the neck muscles: Lean your head to one side and pull your other arm down. The stretch can be intensified by pushing your head down.



1

2. Stretching the chest muscles: Stand upright with your arms spread to the sides or raised in a U shape. Move your chest to the front and pull your arms back until you feel a slight stretching sensation.



2

3. Stretching the shoulder and back muscles: Move your hands crossways in the direction of your shoulder blades. Your upper arms remain in a horizontal position.



3

4. Stretching the shoulder and arm muscles: One hand points down behind your head with your upper arm in a somewhat horizontal position. Push with your other hand against your elbow, thereby pushing your arm down in a straight line.



4

5. Stretching the front thigh muscles: From a standing position, grab one foot and pull it toward your buttocks until you feel a slight stretching sensation. In the process, move your hip consciously toward the front.



5

6. Stretching the calf and rear thigh muscles: In an upright stance with legs stretched, move your upper body to the front. Shift your hip forward, and avoid rounding your back.



6

7. Stretching the inner thigh muscles: In a standing position, spread your legs to the outside until you feel a slight stretching sensation. Move your upper body to the right, to the center, and to the left. Maintain each position for a few seconds.





# Stretching Program: Important Muscle Groups

This program can be used before and after Muay Thai technique training. The stretching is focused primarily on

the muscle groups whose flexibility is important for performing Muay Thai techniques. You can swap exercises for the same muscle group or add other exercises. For pre-and post-stretching, maintain the position for about ten seconds.

1. Stretch your shoulder and arm muscles: Your hands move behind your back. One hand grabs from above and the other from below.



1

2. Stretching the hip and front thigh muscles: After taking a lunge step, your rear leg is resting on the floor. First, move your hip downward. Then yield slightly and pull your lower leg in the direction of your buttocks.



2

3. Stretching the rear thigh muscles: Your legs are stretched and point straight in front. Move the upper part of your body forward.



3

4. Stretching the inner thigh muscles: Sitting on the floor with your legs pulled in, the soles of your feet are pressed together. Let your knees sink to the sides. The pressure can be increased with your arms.



4

# 4. Stamina Training

You are already training in stamina for Muay Thai with exercises specific to the sport, such as shadowboxing, punching bag and pad training, clinching, and sparring. Additional sessions to improve your stamina are helpful if you have difficulty in keeping up with the training intensity at your club, and also in preparation for fights. Separate stamina training sessions are also necessary to lose weight and to reduce body fat.

You can improve your stamina by adding separate jogging units or by adding twenty to forty minutes of jogging to a Muay Thai training session. Skipping rope and swimming are also good methods to improve stamina.

It is important to determine the appropriate intensity for stamina training; the options are described below. Training with basic stamina intensity is recommended for beginners. Martial arts training certainly includes stamina training, but it involves constantly changing intensity. It's necessary to do additional training sessions with basic intensity for stamina and fitness.

Good basic stamina lowers the heart rate in the short lulls between attacks. That means you are conserving energy and staying fit for longer periods. Good fitness stamina helps you through intensive training sessions and competitions.



## Training Intensity

The best possible training intensity depends on your physical condition and training goals. Four intensity

levels are described below.

## *1. Regenerative Training*

Regenerative training involves activities of very low intensity such as, for example, slow jogging, cycling, and swimming. You are at this intensity level for as long as you perceive the strain as comfortable. Once it becomes strenuous, you have exceeded this level. This intensity corresponds to about 65 percent of your maximum heart rate.

A low degree of intensity for faster regeneration is recommended after a strenuous athletic activity. Immediately after training, you can jog for another five or ten minutes. You can also plan a separate training session for this intensity level. If, for example, you trained intensively the day before or took part in a competition, which leaves the body tired and the muscles tense, this type of training can accelerate the regeneration of your body.

## *2. Basic Stamina Intensity*

Basic stamina is trained at moderate intensity. In the course of training, you still have to be able to speak. The level of intensity is too much, however, if you feel tired and exhausted in training. Basic stamina intensity can be determined precisely with a heart monitor; this level of intensity corresponds to about 75 percent of your maximum heart rate.

In terms of health, this level of intensity is the most

important in training. It develops blood circulation, strengthens the immune system, and uses a substantial proportion of energy extracted from body fat. The types of physical activity recommended are jogging, cycling, walking, and indoor training while connected to a cardio device. Well-developed basic stamina has a positive effect in all kinds of sports. The heart rate quickly returns to normal, and the time required for regeneration is reduced. This is especially important in competition, as it makes you physically fit and able to concentrate for longer periods. Regular training in this area lowers your resting heart rate. After a few weeks you will perform better at the same heart rate, meaning, for example, that you will be able to run longer distances and run faster.

## *3. Fitness Stamina Intensity*

You will be at this intensity level if you exert yourself in training but still able to continue for several minutes. This intensity level is too much if you have to stop because of excessive acidity in the muscles. Fitness stamina intensity can be determined precisely with the help of a heart monitor. This level of intensity corresponds to about 85 percent of your maximum heart rate.

At this level you train your muscles and general fitness. In training this level of intensity feels like a strain, and after training your muscles clearly feel more strained as well. You can use any kind of stamina training to achieve this level of intensity, including especially those activities where the level of intensity can be adapted to these

requirements. This level of training intensity is a necessity for advanced athletes to achieve performance improvements. Before you start with this type of training, you first have to have built up a solid stamina base. Stamina training for fitness can also be enjoyed more, as you don't exceed the intensity level even though you increase your running speed. In addition, your body regenerates quickly, and fitness returns soon after training.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Is It Better to Reduce Body Fat through Slow Jogging?

To reduce body fat, you can run at a slow or a fast pace. Regardless of the intensity, you can only reduce body fat if you achieve a negative balance of calories. That means eating fewer calories in a day than what you burn.

When training in **basic stamina intensity**, a good part of the energy you use is taken from body fat. This is why lots of people believe that this is the optimum approach to reducing body fat. **Fitness stamina intensity**, however, clearly burns more calories in the same amount of time, which is why

the absolute degree of fat reduction is higher at the fitness stamina intensity level. The more intensive the strain is, the lower the proportion of fat is used for energy, and the higher the absolute amount of fat consumed.

This does not necessarily mean that the fitness stamina intensity level is better for reducing body fat, because not only calorie consumption but also **calorie intake** has to be considered. After an intensive training session, the body wants to quickly replenish its empty carbohydrate stores. If you then take in more calories than you used, the training has been wasted. Following training at the basic stamina level, you will be less hungry than after training at the fitness stamina level, and it will be easier to eat the right amount of food.

After an intensive strain, the body needs more time for **regeneration**. As a result of intensive stamina training, the body may be too tired for Muay Thai training the next day. Intensive training also hampers the immune system and makes you more susceptible to injury and infection. Training at the basic stamina level, on the other hand, improves the immune system, as the body is only slightly strained.

**Conclusion:** the best level of intensity to reduce body fat depends on your performance level and

your training goals. Beginners should only train at the basic stamina intensity level in their first sessions, as this type of training is less strenuous for the body. Advanced athletes choose between the two intensity levels and adapt their calorie consumption and regeneration periods according to their individual requirements.

## *4. Anaerobic Intensity*

At the threshold between aerobic and anaerobic energy generation, the body is trained to withstand more strain for longer periods. In the process, the body partially gains its energy anaerobically, meaning the body is unable to acquire all the oxygen needed for energy conversion. The body now primarily burns carbohydrates, which produces the residual substance lactate, the base of lactic acid. Lactate can't be broken down quickly by the body. Once the threshold between aerobic and anaerobic energy generation is exceeded, like during a hard exchange of blows in a Muay Thai fight, the production of lactic acid will increase disproportionately. This causes hyperacidity, and activity must stop after a short amount of time.

Health-oriented stamina training is not aimed at training at this level of intensity. Professional athletes, however, do some of their training sessions at this level, which requires a solid stamina base. The heart rate drops quickly after the strain, and training can continue.

# Determining and Controlling Training Intensity

First, you have to know your maximum heart rate before you can determine the training heart rate best suited to your stamina training. It is the basis of calculating training intensity. The easiest way to determine your maximum heart rate is to use the formula: Maximum heart rate (MHR) = 220 – age

This method has been proven in many tests, but it may be different for some individuals. Professional athletes frequently use the maximum heart rate test, in which the heart rate is pushed to its maximum during intense activity. This could include, for example, a sprint up to their personal performance limit. The test is not recommended for fitness-oriented athletes, as the unusually intensive strain runs a strong risk of injury.

| MHR | 220 – age |
|---|---|
| Regenerative training level | about 65% of MHR |
| Basic stamina level | about 75% of MHR |
| Fitness stamina level | about 85% of MHR |

## *Example for a thirty-year-old*

Maximum heart rate per the formula: 220 – 30 = 190

MHR

Regenerative training level: 190 × 0.65 = heart rate of 124

Basic stamina level: 190 × 0.75 = heart rate of 143

Fitness stamina level: 190 × 0.85 = heart rate of 162

## *Your Training Intensity Level*

In your training sessions, try to get close to your optimum heart rate.

| | Training pulse rate |
|---|---|
| Regenerative training area | |
| Basic stamina area | |
| Fitness area | |

### Important Tips: Measuring Intensity

For stamina training, you should use a heart rate monitor. You wear a belt around your chest that measures your heartbeat. A heart rate–monitoring

watch can show you the information on your wrist. These devices can usually be adjusted to your individual stamina level for training. The unit beeps if you exceed the target heart rate. Good models are available at specialty stores from about $100.




**Khru Pit trains Nonsai in knee techniques.**

## Selecting Your Stamina Activity

Beginners train at the basic stamina intensity level, as this type of training makes the body more resistant and lowers

the resting and active heart rate. For moderate stamina training, choose a physical activity that allows you to maintain a nearly constant pace throughout so that your heart rate remains at the planned intensity level.

Advanced athletes can train at the fitness stamina level, increasing the pace and integrating interval training with varying speeds into the stamina training. In running training, for example, you alternate quick runs over short distances with longer runs at reduced speed. The body gets used to strain at different levels of intensity and learns to normalize the heart rate again after the effort. Interval training can be any physical activity that is carried out at different speeds.

## Important Tips: The Structure of Training

Stamina training can be done in separate training sessions or in combination with Muay Thai training. Even though many Thai athletes begin their training with a stamina unit, it's better to do it after the training in techniques. That way you conserve energy and are better prepared for the training specific to Muay Thai.

Stamina training should be done at least once a week. Each stamina unit must last a minimum of

twenty to thirty minutes to achieve an effect. Beginners train in stamina at moderate intensity; advanced athletes can train with varying intensities.

## *Skipping Rope*

Skipping rope is an important type of training for Muay Thai, as it develops stamina, power, coordination, and speed. You will quickly see your coordination improve, and after a few training sessions you'll be able to skip faster without getting caught in the rope.

Hold each end of the rope in your hands and place both feet on the middle of the rope. Stretch your arms sideways at about a forty-five-degree angle to your ribs. This is the correct length for skipping. Shorten the rope until the handles are in the required position. If you use a skipping rope without handles, wrap the ends of the rope around your hands to create the right length. Try to skip with little effort, your upper body erect, and your shoulders relaxed. Start to jump across your toes and from the balls of your feet, and return to the starting position.

- Standard skip: swing the rope from back to front over your head. Jump simultaneously with both feet above the swinging rope, and return to the floor with both feet at the same time. Return smoothly to the balls of your feet.
- Running skip: skip as if you were running. Jump with

one foot across the moving rope onto your other foot. This is the fastest possible way to cross the rope.

- One-legged skip: skip several times with one foot across the moving rope before changing legs. Beginners will start to feel the intensity after five skips. Advanced athletes can easily perform twenty consecutive skips on the same leg.
- Skipping with bent knees: pull one knee toward your upper body while you jump across the rope with your other leg. Then pull up your skipping leg and jump with your other leg. Alternate the right and left legs, and keep pulling up the knee of your opposite leg.
- Skipping with crossed arms: jump off the floor and cross your arms in front of your body before the rope goes under your feet. Uncross your arms as soon as the rope is above your body.
- Double-rotation skip: jump with both feet far off the ground and pull your knees toward your chest. In the process, the rope passes twice before your feet return to the floor. Only advanced athletes can use this technique as it takes a lot of strength and good coordination.



# 5. Strength Training

Strength training is an important component of training for Thai boxers to improve their performance. Strength training helps to increase power in punches, blows, throws, and kicks, and it allows for better reaction to an opponent's techniques. Strength exercises are usually done after the training in techniques, but separate strength sessions can improve muscle power. You can also use strength training to counter any muscle imbalances, which increase the risk of injury.

The following section contains exercises and programs to strengthen the body that are particularly suited for Muay Thai practitioners. These are balanced programs that can be adapted to your own requirements. When planning your program, make sure that you not only train the muscles used predominantly in Thai boxing but also do balancing exercises, such as the Shoulder Bridge for the muscles in the back of the leg.

Some of the exercises presented are demanding and must be practiced carefully to avoid the risk of injury. Difficult exercises such as the Kick out of a One-Legged Knee Bend and Handstand Push-Up are initially trained in with a limited range of movement, and then progressively extended with more experience. If an exercise isn't working as described, use another exercise for the same set of muscles. You can find more exercises in the book *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters* (2006).

In many exercises it is possible to use an exercise ball, a balance board, and a balance cushion. Even if you haven't

used this equipment before, you should put it to the test in these exercises. Training with equipment helps improve the interplay of muscles and provides excellent strengthening of the trunk muscles.



**Pushups with a balance board and an exercise ball.**

## Stimulation Training

To improve continually in your strength training, you have to stimulate your body. Our bodies react to physical strain with an adaptation process. If you train harder than in the previous session, your body will reach a higher level after a period of regeneration. This process is called *supercompensation*. The intensity and method are extremely important for the adaptation process and performance improvement. Allowing for appropriate regeneration and a

healthy and balanced diet are also important factors for successful strength training.

## Training Frequency

Significant change in the shape of the body and strengthening muscles can only be achieved through regular training. Strength training once a week will maintain strength, but improving performance requires two weekly training sessions for all muscle groups. If the time between sessions is any longer, the muscles will slowly degrade. That is why you should try to train all muscle groups at least once a week, even if you don't have much time to spare. If you are ill, don't do strength training, as it can endanger the healing process.

## Regeneration Phase

The time required for regeneration and adaptation depends on how much you've stimulated your body, the training conditions, and the training method you used. Appropriately organizing the time for regeneration accelerates recovery.

The best results from training are achieved if the break between training sessions is correct. If the body doesn't have sufficient time for regeneration, it can lead to overtraining and deterioration in your level of performance. Performance levels also decline if you leave too much time between training sessions. It's difficult to set the regeneration phase precisely because various

factors influence it. The time for regeneration is usually given as twenty-four to forty-eight hours. The goal in setting your regeneration time is to understand your body better to establish an optimum training plan.

Listen to your body; train if it's ready to perform. If you feel weak and tired, you should train other muscle groups or skip a training session. The first signs that you are training too much are feeling weak, poor sleep, sweating, and a slight increase in body temperature. If you continue overexerting your body, your performance will decline and you'll be more susceptible to injury and infection. This applies more to competitive athletes than to beginners, although even for them it's fairly rare.

## Selecting Exercises and Programs

The exercises introduced in the following sections train all the muscle groups. Use the training variants to technically master the skills, and choose those that correspond to the training intensity you have planned. The workouts are kept short to allow you to do several strength training units per week so that you don't have to limit your Muay Thai training. Remember not to do the same workout two days in a row, and to strengthen all muscle groups intensively at least once a week.

## Training Intensity and Repetitions

Newcomers to training should perform the exercises at low intensity. At any level, the intensity you choose

should tend to be low rather than high. Muscles get used to new demands faster than tendons and ligaments, so the body should be allowed to adapt slowly to more intensive training. Before you increase the strain, you have to increase the number of repetitions.

For beginners, fifteen to twenty repetitions of the dynamic exercises are recommended. Some of the intensive exercises introduced below can't be done too many times when you're new to them; the programs give an indication of the appropriate number of repetitions. To avoid injury it is important that the exercises are done correctly. If it turns out that you can't do the minimum number of repetitions, do a less demanding exercise for the same muscle group. Advanced athletes do more repetitions of the dynamic exercises or choose more intensive training variants.

Static exercises are done so that the ending position is held for thirty to sixty seconds. Advanced athletes hold a position for one to two minutes, or they use a more intensive training variant.

## Breaks between Sets

If you exercise with lots of repetitions at fairly low intensity, you take a break of one or two minutes between sets. The body requires a regeneration phase of two to three minutes between sets, however, if you do fewer repetitions at high intensity. As a variant, advanced athletes can use one set for each exercise before they continue with the next set. Once you have done all the

exercises in one set, start again with the first exercise.

## Important Rules for Training

Take a stable starting position to allow you to fully concentrate on executing the exercise. Tense your abdominal muscles, the muscles from your shoulders down your back, and the glutes, and keep your back straight. Occasionally, check your starting position and how you carry out the exercises in front of a mirror.

Concentrate on the muscles you are targeting in each exercise, and be aware of how they move during the exercise. The target muscles must remain active during the entire exercise. In a pull-up, for example, don't relax your arms, but keep them tensed in a slightly bent posture. Do the exercises in slow, even movements, and focus on correct execution; the goal of strength training is effective training of the muscles. For jumping exercises, move slowly into the jump position, and only from there should you move quickly in the jump. Avoid gaining momentum and also taking evasive action using other muscle groups. If your movements are jerky or you twist your body, you might be able to do one extra repetition, but there will be no benefit to training your muscles; moving incorrectly will only help you complete the exercise.

These exercises can strain and exhaust the body. If you feel pain, take a break. If the pain recedes in the resting state, think about the underlying reason for it and try to repeat the exercise. Stop the exercise if the same pain occurs again and continue with the next thing in your

training plan. If the pain doesn't subside while resting, end the training session and contact a doctor.

Exercises for the left and right sides of the body should always be done at the same intensity; make sure your training is balanced, and integrate all the large muscle groups into your training program.

## Breathing

It is better to do the exercises at a fairly slow pace with steady breathing. Don't interrupt the rhythm of your breathing, as this leads to insufficient oxygen intake and considerable health risks. If you do rapid exercises at high intensity, breathe in on the way down and breathe out in the exertion phase when stretching or straightening up. Continue with the same breath rate in all repetitions. If you hold the ending position for some seconds, make sure you are breathing consciously.

## *Execution of the Exercise*

Take the starting position and do the exercise based on the instructions provided. Do the number of repetitions indicated for your performance level. Choose an intensity level where you are able to perform the repetitions technically correctly and without taking any wrong positions or compensating movements. Even though an exercise is described for only one side of the body, always strengthen both sides.




**Neck pulls strengthen the neck muscles.**

The priority of these exercises for muscle strengthening is marked high (+ +) or low (+).

# K1: Push-Ups

## Strengthening:

++ **Chest muscles**

+ **Lower arms, front shoulders, lower back, stomach, rear upper-arm muscles**

**Starting Position**
Rest with your hands on the floor and your toes or lower legs on an exercise ball. Hold your hands apart at shoulder width with your fingers pointing up. Tense your abdominal muscles and the muscles of your buttocks to stabilize your back, and pull your shoulder back and down. Your head and eyes point to the floor.

**Execution**
Bend your arms until your upper body nearly touches the floor. Your elbows stay close to your body. Next, stretch your arms and move back into the starting position. Keep your entire body tensed, and make sure that your back stays straight.

**Variants**
If you don't have an exercise ball, you can rest your toes on an object of medium height, but this will reduce the intensity of training.





**A–B:** *The starting and ending positions.*









**C–F:** *Rowing pushups.*

Pushups on the fists help stabilize the wrists. Doing fist pushups on an exercise ball is very intensive.

Advanced athletes can strengthen the hand muscles with

pushups on the inner and outer edges of the hands. Advanced athletes can also do pushups on the fingers; the higher the performance level is, the fewer fingers are used.

You can also train explosive strength by thrusting with your hands out of the low push-up position and clapping your hands in the air.

Another very intensive variant is to do the exercise on dumbbells and combine it with rowing. Start with the planned number of repetitions in a rowing motion on the right side, then on the left, and finally as pushups.

## K2: Pull-Ups

### Strengthening:

+ + **Upper back, front upper-arm muscles**

+ **Shoulder, stomach, hand muscles**

**Starting Position**

Hang on a pull-up bar. Your arms are close to each other, and the palms of your hands point forward. Your body posture is straight, and your stomach muscles are tensed.

**Execution**

Pull yourself up with an even movement until your chin is above the bar. In the process of the movement, bring your elbows to your ribs. Briefly hold the ending position

before you slowly return to the starting position. Lower your body only so far that your arms are still slightly bent, and avoid any compensating movement, such as raising your shoulders.

**Variants**

You can also grip the bar at shoulder width with the back of your hands facing forward. A very effective variant is pulling yourself several yards up a rope. You can achieve a similar effect if you put a towel around a high object, grab the ends of the towel, and pull yourself up.



**A–C:** *Pull-up sequence.*

## K3: Dumbbell Rowing

## Strengthening:

++ **Upper back muscles**

\+ **Neck, rear shoulder, front upper-arm muscles**

**Starting Position**
Take a lunge step and support yourself with one hand on an exercise ball, another object, or your front thigh. Your other arm hangs down with a dumbbell held in that hand, your palm pointing toward your body. Your back is straight, and the muscles of your stomach and buttocks are tensed.

**Execution**
Pull your elbow up as far as possible to the rear and close to your body. Next, lower your arm slowly, but not to full extension. Repeat the exercise. Avoid compensating movements of the upper body and shoulder, and make sure your upper body is straight.

**Variants**
Advanced athletes can row with both arms and the upper body bent forward. To do this, hold a barbell at shoulder width, or hold two dumbbells in corresponding positions. At the end of the movement, pull your elbows up and to the rear, and move your shoulder blades toward one another. Your back should remain immobile in the process. Make sure that your abdominal muscles remain tensed.



**A–B:** *The starting and ending positions.*



**C:** *Rowing with both arms*.

## K4: Overhead Press

Strengthening:

+ + **Shoulder muscles, especially the lateral parts**

+ Neck, rear upper-arm muscles

**Starting Position**
Sit upright on an exercise ball or a chair. Your arms are in the air, elbows pointing away from your body, your head between the dumbbells. Hold the dumbbells with your thumbs pointing to one another. Tense your abdominal and buttock muscles.

**Execution**
Lift the dumbbells to a position next to each other without changing the position of your hands. Next, move your arms slowly back into the starting position before repeating the exercise. Avoid pushing your head forward, avoid compensating movements to the front or rear with the dumbbells, and make sure your back is straight.

**Variants**
The exercise can be done in a standing position or with a long bar instead of dumbbells. The handstand push-up is a good alternative. Put your hands against a stable wall and raise your stretched legs. In a nearly vertical position, bend your arms until your head is close to the floor. Next, stretch your arms up again.



**A–B:** *The starting and ending positions.*



**C:** *The handstand push-up.*

## K5: Neck Pulls

Strengthening:

+ + **Neck and jaw muscles**

**Starting Position**
Hold a cable between your teeth with several weight plates attached to it. Slightly bend your head to the front and tense your abdominal and buttock muscles.

**Execution**
Slowly raise the back of your head. Next, lower your head again and repeat the exercise. Make slow and even movements, and don’t use too much weight, as you could damage your teeth.

**Variants**
The exercise can also be done with the weight on the back of the head. Other variants are putting tension on the palms or against a towel, which allow you strengthen the neck muscles from the rear, front, and side. These variants don’t train the jaw muscles, however.



**A–B:** *Tension on the back of the neck.*



**C:** *Tension against the towel.*

# K6: Lunge Steps

## Strengthening:

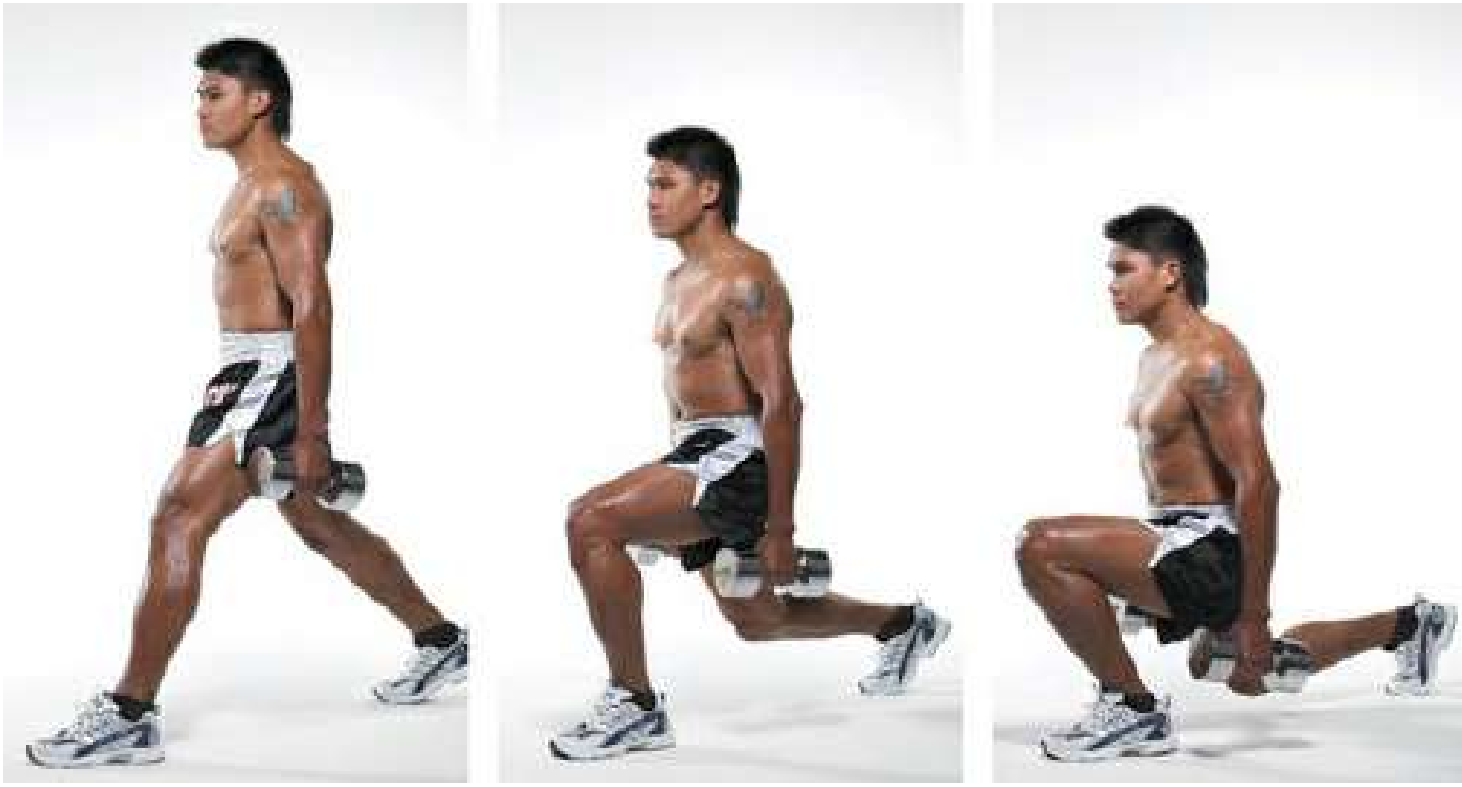
++ **Thigh muscles, particularly the front thigh muscles, glutes, back muscles**

+ **Calves, front of the upper arm, lower arm, back muscles**

**Starting Position**
Take a lunge step. Your rear leg rests on your toes, or place your instep on an object. Hold dumbbells in your hands or a weight such as a punching bag. Tense your abdominal muscles, and keep your upper body straight.

**Execution**
Bend your knees as much as possible, but don't rest them on the floor and don't change the position of your feet. Make sure that your front knee remains above your foot and doesn't move to the front or side. Next, stretch your legs and repeat the exercise.

**Variants**
Advanced athletes can rest the front foot on a moveable surface such as a balance board or a balance cushion.



**A–C:** *Lunge step sequence.*

## K7: Squats

### Strengthening:

++ **Thigh muscles, especially the front part of the thighs, and glutes**

\+ **Calves, upper and lower arm, back muscles**

**Starting Position**

Stand upright with slightly bent knees. Your feet are slightly farther apart than the width of your shoulders, and they point slightly to the sides. Hold a weight, for example a punching bag, in front of your body with your lower arms. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes and

keep your back straight.

**Execution**

Bend your knees until your thighs are slightly below horizontal. In the process, shift your buttocks backward. Briefly hold the ending position, tense your leg muscles at full strength, and breathe evenly. Next, stretch your legs and raise your heels at the end of the movement. Make sure that your knees remain above your feet and don't move to the front or side. Then do a repetition.

**Variants**

Beginners should do the exercise with a limited range of motion or without a weight. You can vary the weight by holding the punching bag on your shoulder or by using dumbbells.





**A–C:** *The sequence for squats.*

# K8: Jumping out of a Squat

## Strengthening:

++ **Thigh muscles, particularly the front part of the thighs, glutes**

\+ **Calf, abdominal, lower back muscles**

**Starting Position**
Stand upright with slightly bent knees. Your feet are apart at about shoulder width, and they point slightly to the sides. Hold your arms up in front of your body. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes.

**Execution**
Bend your knees until your thighs are slightly below horizontal, and at the same time push your buttocks backward. Next, jump up and deliver a knee kick. After that, return to the bent-knee position and repeat the exercise. Make sure your execution of the exercise is controlled and that your knees stay above your feet while bending.

**Variants**
Advanced athletes can vary the jump to do a flying kick or elbow and fist techniques. The knee bend can also be

done with one leg. Another training variant is to do the jump while on a tire.



**A–C:** *The sequence for jumping out of the squat.*



**D:** *Doing the variant exercise on a tire.*

## K9: Kicking out of a One-Legged Squat

Strengthening:

- + + **Thigh muscles, particularly the front part of the thighs, glutes, calf muscles**
- + **Abdominal and lower back muscles**

**Starting Position**
Take a lunge step, and then raise one leg up in the air behind you. For a stable stance, distribute your weight on the ball of the foot, the outer edge of the foot, and the heel. Your arms form an easy guard in front of your body. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes.

**Execution**
Bend the knee of your pivot leg until your thigh is slightly below horizontal, and push your buttocks backward at the same time. Next, stretch your pivot leg in an explosive motion while delivering a push kick with your other leg. Then repeat the exercise. Make sure that your knee stays above your foot and that your leg muscles are continuously activated during the bend.

**Variants**
The kick can be into the air or against a punching bag. Beginners do the knee bend with both legs. Advanced athletes can deliver flying kicks. Other options are knee kicks and round kicks.



**A–C:** *The sequence of kicking out of a one-legged squat.*

## K10: The Shoulder Bridge

Strengthening:

+ + **Rear thigh muscles, glutes**

+ **Front thigh, lower back muscles**

**Starting Position**

Lie on your back with your legs nearly stretched out and your heels on an exercise ball. Your hands are relaxed and rest on the floor. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes, and tense your heels somewhat into the ball. Lift your pelvis so that your thigh and your back form a line.

**Execution**
Roll the ball with your heels in the direction of your buttocks and keep raising your pelvis. Stop briefly in the ending position before you roll the ball back to the starting position. Make sure your movements are even and your buttocks are tensed.

**Variants**
Advanced athletes can do the exercise with one leg. If you don’t have an exercise ball, put your heels on a towel spread out on a smooth floor. As an alternative, take small steps with your heels in the direction of your buttocks while your pelvis remains elevated.



**A–B:** *Rolling the exercise ball.*



**C:** *The one-legged variant for advanced athletes.*

## K11: Crunches with Turns

Strengthening:

+ + **Front and lateral abdominal muscles**

**Starting Position**

Lie on your back with your legs bent or stretched and your heels on the floor. Your hands are at your temples. During the exercise, push your heels against the floor

slightly so that your back isn’t hollow.

**Execution**
Raise your upper body slowly and don’t develop any momentum so that the entire motion is controlled by your abdominal muscles. Turn to the left and to the right before you lower your upper body. Don’t rest your body on the floor but rather repeat the exercise to ensure continued muscle tension.

**Variants**
You can intensify the exercise by holding a medicine ball or a weight disc in your hands. The exercise can also be done on an exercise ball.







**A–C:** *The sequence for crunches with turns.*

## K12: The Beetle

### Strengthening:

++ **Front abdominal muscles, particularly the sloping muscles**

\+ **Lateral abdominal muscles**

**Starting Position**
Lie on your back with your hands at your temples. Raise your head with your arms and legs off the floor to build tension in your body.

**Execution**
Move your upper body to the right while pulling your right knee and your left elbow toward each other. Next, return slowly to the starting position, but don't rest your body on the floor. Alternate by raising your upper body to the right and left until you have completed the planned number of repetitions. Avoid swinging motions and hollowing your back.

**Variants**
You can also start by doing the first half of the planned number of repetitions to one side before you continue with the remaining repetitions on the other side. For

higher intensity, hold your arms stretched upward in the starting position.







**A–C:** *The beetle.*

## K13: The Plank

Strengthening:

+ + **Front abdominal muscles**

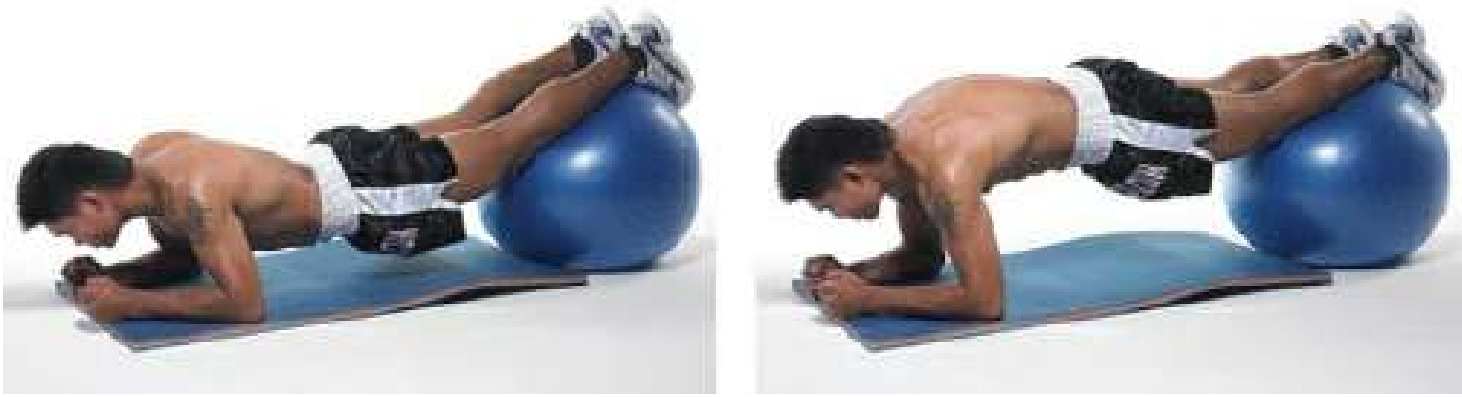
+ **Lateral abdominals, shoulder, lower back, front thigh muscles**

**Starting Position**
Lie on your stomach with your shins resting on an exercise ball. Shift your weight to your lower arms so that your elbows are below your shoulder joints. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes.

**Execution**
Push your upper body up until your back is straight and your legs are stretched. Tense your lower legs and elbows against each other, and concentrate on the activity of your abdominal muscles. Depending on your performance level, hold the ending position for twenty to sixty seconds. Make sure your breathing is even and that your back isn't hollow. Static execution over several seconds corresponds to one set of dynamic exercises.

**Variants**
Advanced athletes can support themselves with their toes

on the ball. You can also alternate by raising one leg. If you don't have an exercise ball, rest your toes on the floor or on an object of medium height, although this lowers the intensity of the exercise.



**A–B:** *The starting and ending positions.*

## K14: The Lateral Plank

### Strengthening:

++ **Lateral abdominal muscles**

+ **Front abdominals, outer thighs, lower back, shoulder muscles**

**Starting Position**

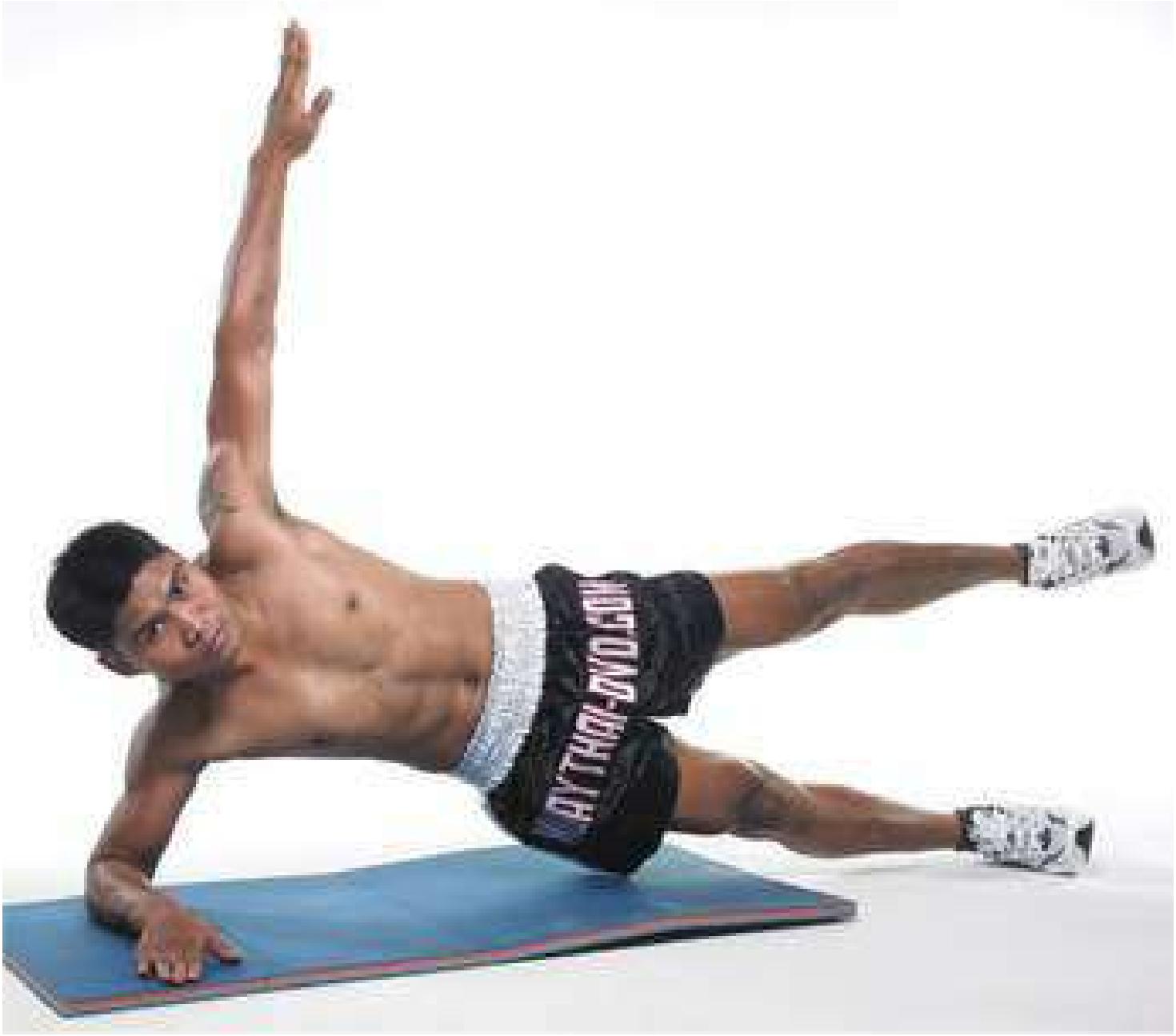
Lie on your side and support yourself with your forearm positioned under your shoulder. The side of your pelvis and lower leg are resting on the floor. Tense your forearm and your foot against each other.

**Execution**
Raise your pelvis and your thigh so that only the outside of your foot is touching the floor. Briefly hold the ending position before your pelvis moves down but don't let it rest on the floor. Next, repeat the exercise. Make sure your breathing is even and avoid compensating movements such as twisting your upper body.

**Variants**
You can intensify the exercise by raising your upper leg and your upper arm. Very advanced athletes do the exercise with the outside of the foot or the forearm on an exercise ball.



**A–B:** *The starting and ending positions.*




**C:** *Higher intensity achieved by raising the arm and the leg.*

## K15: The Reverse Plank

Strengthening:

+ + **Shoulders, lower back, rear thigh muscles**

+ **Abdominal muscles, glutes**

**Starting Position**
Lie on your back with your heels on the floor. Support your weight with your forearms so that your elbows are below your shoulders. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes.

**Execution**
Raise your upper body until your back is straight and your legs are stretched. Tense your heels and elbows against each other and concentrate on the activity of your core muscles. Hold the ending position for twenty to sixty seconds. Make sure your breathing is even and that your back isn't hollow. Static execution over several seconds corresponds to one set of dynamic exercises.

**Variants**
An alternate for advanced athletes is to raise each leg in turn and hold them briefly in the ending position. Very advanced athletes place their feet on an exercise ball. As a variant you can do the exercise with outstretched arms. Concentrate on tensioning your hands and feet against each other without any movement.



**A–B:** *The starting and ending positions.*



**C:** *Higher intensity using the exercise ball.*

## K16: The Superman

Strengthening:

+ + **Lower back muscles**

+ **Neck, rear shoulder muscles, rear thigh muscles**

**Starting Position**

Lie with your stomach on an exercise ball. Your hands and feet are on the floor, and your head hangs freely. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes.

**Execution**

Raise your head, left arm, and right leg at the same time. Raise your arm higher than your head, with your forehead remaining parallel to the floor. Depending on your performance level, the exercise will take twenty to sixty seconds. Make sure your breathing is even and that your abdominal muscles are tensed. Next, do the exercise with the right arm and the left leg. Holding this position corresponds to one set of dynamic exercises.

**Variants**

Advanced athletes use only one hand or foot for support. Very advanced athletes don’t require any point of support. If you don’t have an exercise ball, you can do the exercise on the floor, but this decreases the intensity.



**A–B:** *The Superman sequence.*



**C:** *Intensifying the exercise.*

# K17: Leg Pulls and Push-Ups

## Strengthening:

+ + **Front and lateral abdominals, chest, rear upper arm, lower back muscles**

+ **Shoulders, front thigh muscles**

**Starting Position**

Start in push-up position with your shins positioned on an exercise ball. Put your weight on your hands so that they are beneath your shoulder joints. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes, with your shoulders down and to the back, and keep your back straight.

**Execution**

Pull your stretched legs toward your chest, thereby rolling the exercise ball forward. Your buttocks move up during the process. Briefly hold this position. Next, roll the ball back into the starting position and do a push-up. Then repeat the exercise. Make sure that pulling in the legs and the pushup are done in one fluid motion and that your back remains straight or slightly arched upward.

**Variants**

You can simplify the exercise by pulling in your knees rather than your extended legs. If you don’t have an exercise ball, you can rest your feet on a folded towel on an even surface to do the exercise.







**A–C:** *The sequence of leg pulls and pushups.*

# K18: Squats and Push-Ups

## Strengthening:

**+ + Thigh muscles, particularly the front part of the thighs, chest muscles, glutes**

**+ Calves, front of the shoulders, rear upper-arm muscles**

**Starting Position**
Stand upright with slightly bent knees. Your feet are slightly farther apart than shoulder width, and they point slightly outward. Your hands hang freely at the sides of your body.

**Execution**
First, bend your knees as your heels rise, and place your palms on the floor in front of you. Then jump back with your feet into the push-up position and do a push-up. Next, jump back to the front, and finally back into the starting position. Then repeat the exercise. Make sure that your motion is fluid and that your knees don't move in or out.

**Variants**
The exercise can be intensified by stretching your arms

above your head during the jump and by holding an exercise ball in your hands.









**A–D:** *The sequence of squats and pushups.*

# K19: Lifting the Punching Bag

## Strengthening:

+ + **Lower back, thigh muscles, glutes**

+ **Forearm, upper back, front and rear upper arms, calves, chest, neck muscles**

**Starting Position**

Stand upright with knees slightly bent. Your feet are slightly farther apart than shoulder width, and they point outward. On the floor between your legs is a punching bag. Bend your knees while shifting your buttocks backward and grab the punching bag. Tense your abdominal muscles and glutes, and keep your back straight.

**Execution**

Lift the punching bag while stretching your legs. Rest the punching bag briefly on your shoulder, and continue by lifting the bag into the air. Next, return the bag to the shoulder position before you put it back on the floor in a controlled sequence of motion. Make sure that your abdominal muscles remain continuously tensed and that your back stays straight. Follow up with a repetition.

**Variants**

Beginners can use a medicine ball for the exercise. Very advanced athletes don't rest the bag on the floor or on their shoulder. As an alternative you can do the exercise with a barbell. Hold onto the barbell with a wide grip.



**A–C:** *The sequence of lifting the punching bag.*

# 6. Workouts

This section describes workouts that can be performed in solo training. Use these workouts as inspiration for your training plans and adapt them to your own requirements. The more specifically the training plan is adapted to your requirements, the better your results in training will be.

The workouts include a warming-up phase, a main part, and a cooling-down phase. First, you have to warm up by doing a warm-up exercise such as jogging or skipping rope at low intensity. Next, do some stretching and loosen up. Depending on your experience, decide whether you'll stretch dynamically or statically. In the main part, concentrate on training in techniques, stamina, or strength. You can start out with the workout program provided and adapt the sequence and type of exercises to your own needs. Finish the training with a cooling-down phase. This could be some light rope-skipping before some final stretching of the muscles that are prone to shortening.

These workouts are kept relatively short to allow you to do many repetitions, to reduce the strain on your body, and to shorten the time the body requires for regeneration. You can intensify the workouts by increasing the number of rounds or sets as well as the intensity; you can also reduce the intensity. It is also possible to exchange the exercises for others for greater variety in the workouts. Don't repeat the same workout two days in a row.

You should skip training completely one day a week, especially if you train at high intensity the other days of the week, regardless of the type of training you're doing. Make sure to change up your training program after a training cycle of six to twelve weeks so that your body faces continually changing demands and so that your performance doesn't stagnate. When you set up a training program, take into consideration the time needed for

regeneration before the next training session. When organizing your workouts, keep in mind that each muscle group must be strengthened intensively at least once a week to maintain your performance level.

## Workout A: Training in Techniques

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Warm-up with light rope-skipping | 10 min. | 10 min. | 10 min. |
| Stretching and loosening | 5–10 min. | 5–10 min. | 5–10 min. |
| Muay Thai kata and/or shadowboxing | 5 min. | 5 min. | 10 min. |
| Punching bag training | 2–3 rounds | 3 rounds | 3–5 rounds |
| Speed training: Straight punches, elbows, round kicks to the body, push kicks, knee kicks, with or without punching bag grip | 30 each, left and right, without a break | 50 each, left and right, without a break | 100 each, left and right, without a break |
| Body-weight exercises | 5 min. | 5–10 min. | 10 min. |
| Skipping rope with intervals | 10 min. | 15 min. | 20 min. |
| Light rope-skipping | 5 min. | 5 min. | 5 min. |
| Stretching and loosening | 5 min. | 5 min. | 5 min. |

This program can be used for your individual Muay Thai training. If you don't have a punching bag available, extend your shadowboxing. In your training, you should imagine that you are fighting a real opponent.

Initially warm up the body with light rope-skipping, followed by stretching and loosening exercises. Next, continue with repetitions of a Muay Thai kata, followed by training in techniques in shadowboxing and on a punching bag. In shadowboxing and punching bag training, it is best to train in a combination sequence in the first rounds. Choose one or two sequences and

practice them in the course of one round. In the last round, train by instinct. Next, continue with speed training. Practice specific fist, elbow, kick, and knee techniques in sequence. Swift execution with power and without breaks is important. Follow up with body-weight exercises, pushups, sit-ups, and the Superman exercise. Select exercises that are particular useful for your training. Skip rope at different speeds for ten to twenty minutes. Training concludes with slow rope-skipping along with stretching and loosening-up exercises.

## Workout B: Stamina Training

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Warm-up with light jogging | 10 min. | 10 min. | 10 min. |
| Stretching and loosening | 5–10 min. | 5–10 min. | 5–10 min. |
| Run at increasing speeds | 10 min. | 10 min. | 10 min. |
| 60-yard or 100-yard sprint | ❄ | 3 | 5–10 |
| 400-yard run | ❄ | 2 | 2–5 |
| Running at fitness stamina intensity | 10 min. | 20 min. | 10 min. |
| Running at basic stamina intensity | 20 min. | 10 min. | 10 min. |
| Light jog | 5 min. | 5 min. | 5 min. |
| Stretching and loosening | 5 min. | 5 min. | 5 min. |

This workout can be done on a running track in a stadium or outside. The exercises require a heart-rate monitor. Don't overestimate your performance level, or you'll be very tired in your next Muay Thai training. This program is a suggestion for the structure of your training in

running; adapt it to your requirements. Start at Level 1 with the main training at basic stamina intensity. Once you have reached a satisfactory level in one area, you can move to the next level.

Start by warming up the body with a light jog, followed up with stretching and loosening exercises. Once your body is warmed up, do the runs at increasing speeds. The runs comprise continuous changes between fast and slow, and they train the body to return quickly to a normal heart rate. Don't run at full speed; 80 percent is sufficient. Advanced athletes do sprints and four-hundred-yard runs. Between sprints they take a break of one to two minutes, and between four-hundred-yard runs they take two to three minutes. This break means a continuation of the run at very low speed, but not at complete rest. The training is done at fitness stamina intensity and basic stamina intensity. Finally, wind up the program by jogging at a very slow pace and stretching and loosening.

## Workout C: Strength Training

Warm-up exercises and stretching

1. K1: Intensive PushUps, with or without an exercise ball
2. K2: Pull-Ups or Pull-Ups on a Rope, or K3: Dumbbell Rowing
3. K4: Overhead Press or Handstand PushUps
4. K7: Squats, or K6: Lunge Steps

5. K10: The Shoulder Bridge, with or without an exercise ball
6. K11: Crunches with Turns, with or without an exercise ball, or K12: The Beetle
7. K16: The Superman, with or without an exercise ball

Cooling-down exercise and stretching

Beginners: 2 sets, 10–20 repetitions per set

K2: 10–15 repetitions per set

K16: 20–40 seconds per set

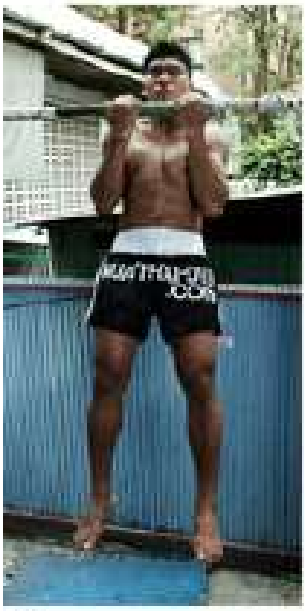
Advanced athletes: 3 sets, 10–20 repetitions per set

K16: 40–60 seconds per set

**Workout C:** *K1, K2, K4, K7, K10, K11, K16*



K1



K2



K4



K7



K10



K11



K16

## Workout D: Punching Power

Warm-up exercises and stretching

# 1 . K1: PushUps with hand-clapping

2. K1: PushUps with an exercise ball

3. K3: Dumbbell Rowing, or K2: Pull-Ups or Pull-Ups on a Rope
4. K4: Overhead Press or Handstand PushUps
5. K19: Lifting the Punching Bag, or K6: Lunge Steps
6. K13: The Plank, with or without an exercise ball, or K12: The Beetle
7. K15: The Reverse Plank, with or without an exercise ball

Cooling-down exercise and stretching

Beginners: 2 sets, 10–20 repetitions per set

K13, K15: 20–40 seconds per set

Advanced athletes: 3 sets, 10–20 repetitions per set

K13, K15: 40–60 seconds per set

**Workout D:** *K1, K1, K3, K4, K19, K13, K15*



K1



K1



K3



K4



K19



K13



K15

## Workout E: Explosive Kicks

Warm-up exercises and stretching

1. K8: Jumping out of a Squat

2. K9: Kicking out of a One-Legged Squat
3. K18: Squats and PushUps

# 4. K6: Lunge Steps

5. K10: The Shoulder Bridge, with or without an exercise ball

Cooling-down exercise and stretching

Beginners: 2 sets, 5–10 repetitions per set

K10: 10–20 repetitions per set

Advanced athletes: 3 sets, 10–20 repetitions per set

**Workout E:** *K8, K9, K18, K6, K10*



K8



K9



K18



K6



K10

## Workout F: Building Resilience

Warm-up exercises and stretching

# 1. K18: Squats and PushUps

2. K2: Pull-Ups or Pull-Ups on a Rope, or K3: Dumbbell Rowing
3. K5: Neck Pulls, with weights, a resistance band, or a towel
4. K17: Leg Pulls and PushUps, or K12: The Beetle
5. K13: The Plank, with or without an exercise ball
6. K14: The Lateral Plank, with or without an exercise ball
7. K15: The Reverse Plank, with or without an exercise ball

Cooling-down exercise and stretching

Beginners: 2 sets, 10–15 repetitions per set

K13, K15: 20–40 seconds per set

Advanced athletes: 3 sets, 15–30 repetitions per set

K13, K15: 40–60 seconds per set

**Workout F:** *K18, K2, K5, K17, K13, K14, K15*



K18



K2



K5



K17



K13



K14



K15



**Khru Pit holds a pad for Sok Tee.**

Chapter 4

# Techniques

## 1. Introduction to Techniques

In a competition, both competitors usually have a similar level of technical skill and physical performance. To end a competition in your favor, you need an advantage, which you can acquire with the help of the techniques described in this chapter. World Champions Nonsai, Kem, and Saiyok first demonstrate the combinations they use in training to create the patterns of action for a fight. Kem and Saiyok then introduce some of their best counter techniques, which they use successfully in their fights. Next, the most important feints are explained, because a successful feint can lead to a quick end to a fight. With the help of the combinations, counter techniques, and feints discussed below, you can acquire an edge over your opponent.

Always change things up in a fight. Study your opponent, get to know his or her patterns of action, and counter effectively. Apply pressure with combinations and use feints to generate a defense reaction. Put all of the techniques described here to the test and perfect those

that are best suited to your fight style. Practice them repeatedly in club training and also in solo training. To use a technique successfully, you have to learn it by heart. Continue adding new techniques to your repertoire to keep improving your fight style.

Additional information can be found on the DVDs *Muay Thai: Training and Techniques* (2013) and *Muay Thai: Training with World Champions: Saiyok and Kem* (2013).



Khru Pit trains Nonsai's kicks.

# Fight Strategies: An Interview with Trainer Khru Pit

This interview took place in Bangkok in 2012.

**Christoph Delp: Which fight strategies do you recommend against different types of fighters? What strategy do you recommend against a clincher?**

Khru Pit: You have to keep your opponent at bay with a lot of punches and front push kicks to the stomach and legs. You also have to deliver powerful round kicks so that your opponent isn't able to use knee kicks. It's important to stay calm and to concentrate on the fight. A clincher will become more and more careless while pushing forward to apply a grip. You have to wait for the right moment to deliver an uppercut elbow to the chin, which will often result in a knockout.

**What strategy do you recommend against a distance fighter?**

Against a distance fighter, you have to bridge the distance while not getting careless. Kicks have to be blocked from a stable stance before you follow up with powerful punches, kicks, and knees. Once you're close to your opponent, you mustn't let go, and follow if the opponent attempts to dodge.

### What strategy do you recommend against a tricky or unfair opponent?

It's important to stay calm. Don't get rattled or let your opponent's conduct impress you. Above all, act full of confidence, stick to your own style, and don't be swayed by any provocation. The spectators and the referee will comment and react to your opponent's style. Even if you get spit at, don't let yourself be provoked. You have to impress the audience with the consistent assertion of your own fight style.

### What strategy do you recommend against a fast and aggressively approaching opponent?

The most important thing in this case is very secure protection and defense. Pay particular attention to your guard. An opponent who approaches aggressively will become slower and less powerful during the course of the fight. If your opponent's

pressure subsides in the third round, for example, you can become more active and take command of the fight.

### What strategy do you recommend against a southpaw?

I make sure that my fighters frequently change their stance in training. That way they have no difficulty changing their stance or fighting a southpaw. Athletes have to be able to change their stance to be more variable and to surprise the opponent.

### Do you have any special tips for an athlete to be successful in a fight?

On the day of the fight, athletes have to get a grip on their nerves. Prior to the start of the fight, be mindful of your breathing, calm down, and concentrate. Avoid hasty attacks. In Thailand we say *"sabai, sabai"* ("relax").

## 2. Combinations

Combinations teach the swift delivery of consecutive attacking techniques. These are studied in shadowboxing,

on training equipment, and with a training partner. Combinations must be practiced repeatedly, because in a fight situation there is no time to think about the appropriate technique or how techniques can be combined. Only the techniques and combinations that you have frequently trained in and that you are able to use instinctively can be used in a fight.

Professional athletes also train in combinations to set up a pattern of action for a competition. A selection of combinations is made once the opponent is known and that person's strong and weak points have been analyzed.

The following section introduces combinations that Thai boxers Nonsai, Kem, and Saiyok often include in their training. You can practice these combinations at your club or in solo training. It is best to do one or two sequences in the course of a round in training. Nonsai and Kem fight in the conventional stance and Saiyok in the southpaw stance. If you fight with a stance opposite to what's shown in the images, you should reverse left and right in the instructions.



**Kem demonstrates a powerful elbow technique. He is considered one of the best elbow fighters.**

# List of Combinations

Nonsai 1: front straight punch (left), rear rotating elbow (right), pulling in and rear knee kick (right)

Nonsai 2: front straight punch (left), rear straight punch (right), pulling in and rear knee kick (left)

Nonsai 3: front side hook (left), rear round kick (right), push kick (left)

Nonsai 4: front straight punch (left), rear straight punch (right), change of stance, rear round kick (left), rear knee kick (right)

Kem 1: rear straight punch (right), side hook (left), knee kick with pulling (right)

Kem 2: rear round kick (right), change of stance, rear knee kick (left), rear elbow hit (right)

Kem 3: change of stance, rear round kick (left), rear knee kick (left), rear knee kick (right), release with a push kick (right)

Kem 4: rear body punch (right), front side hook (left), rear low kick (right), rear rotating elbow (right), pulling in and rear knee kick (left)

Saiyok 1: front straight punch (right), front push kick (right), rear round kick (left)

Saiyok 2: rear straight punch (left), front rotating elbow (right), rear knee kick (right)

Saiyok 3: rear round kick (left), front reverse elbow (right), rear rotating elbow (right)

Saiyok 4: front straight punch (right), front uppercut elbow (left), rear rotating elbow (right), rear knee kick (right)

# Nonsai: Combination 1

Nonsai demonstrates the combination of a front straight punch, rotating elbow, and knee kick while pulling in his opponent. From the fight position, Nonsai steps forward to bridge the distance. In the process, he delivers a front straight punch. He follows promptly with a rotating elbow from the rear. Next, he pulls in the trainer with the aim of landing an effective knee kick.



A



B



C



D

# Nonsai: Combination 2

Nonsai frequently uses the combination of a front straight punch, rear straight punch, and knee kick. He starts the combination with a small step forward and a front straight punch. He then promptly continues with a powerful

straight punch from the rear. Next, he changes his stance by jumping back with his front leg. He grabs his opponent and finishes with a powerful knee kick from the rear.

An alternative is to perform the knee kick with the other leg, which does not require an initial change of stance.



A



B



C



D

# Nonsai: Combination 3

Another combination, made up of three techniques, that's often used by Nonsai: a side hook, a round kick, and a push kick. He starts from the fight position with a step forward and delivers a side hook with his front fist. He then continues with a powerful kick from the rear before he leaves the fight distance with a front push kick.



A



B



C



D

# Nonsai: Combination 4

Nonsai demonstrates the combination of a front straight punch, a rear straight punch, a round kick, and a knee kick. He starts from the fight position with the combination of front and rear straight punch. He jumps

back with his front leg and uses this leg for a powerful kick. Then he puts down his kicking foot in front of him, following up with a knee kick from the rear and at the same time pulling in the trainer.

As an alternate change of stance prior to the kick, you can also place your rear leg on the floor in front of you. This maneuver is particularly useful if your opponent is moving back.



A



B



C



D



E

# Kem: Combination 1

Kem recommends training in the combination of a rear straight punch, a side hook, and a knee kick. From the fight position, he starts with a powerful straight punch from the rear. He promptly follows up with a front side hook, putting his weight behind the strike. Now he grabs his opponent diagonally with his rear hand and pulls him in for an effective knee kick from the rear.

As an alternative, you can also perform the knee technique without a prior grip.



A



B



C



D

# Kem: Combination 2

Kem frequently uses the combination of a round kick, a knee kick, and an elbow strike. From the fight stance, he starts with a round kick from the rear. He places his kicking leg on the floor in front and delivers a prompt

knee kick with his other leg. During the knee kick, he pulls the trainer toward him. Next, he places his foot on the floor in front of him and continues with a rotating elbow from the rear.

As an alternative, you can also finish the combination with an uppercut elbow.



A



B



C



D

# Kem: Combination 3

Kem recommends training in the combination of a round kick, left and right knee, and release with a push kick. He starts the combination with a change of stance, for which he jumps back with his front leg. Then he promptly continues with a powerful round kick with this leg. He places his kicking leg on the floor behind him and continues with a knee kick from this position. He then puts his kicking leg on the floor in front of him and follows up with a knee kick with his other leg. Kem finishes the combination sequence by releasing himself with a push kick.

For the change of stance, you can either jump back with your front leg or move your rear leg quickly to the front.



A



B



C



D



E

# Kem: Combination 4

Kem shows a combination sequence made up of five techniques: a body punch, a side hook, a low kick, a rotating elbow, and a knee kick while pulling in. From the fight position, Kem steps forward and carries out a rear straight punch to the opponent's body. He continues with a front side hook and a low kick from the rear. Then he returns his kicking leg to the floor behind him and

delivers a rotating elbow from this position. Next, he changes his stance and finishes the sequence with a knee kick.

Make sure to carry out the sequence quickly but not hastily. Each technique must be delivered with power and be technically correct. In the process, you must always maintain a stable standing position.



A



B



C



D



E



F

# Saiyok: Combination 1

Saiyok frequently uses combinations comprising a front straight punch, a front push kick, and a round kick. Bear

in mind that Saiyok is fighting in a southpaw stance and that he is leading with his right hand in his starting position. If you fight with a conventional stance, use the sequence with the sides reversed. He starts with a step forward and a front straight punch. Next, he creates distance from his opponent with a front push kick. He places his foot on the floor in front and follows with a powerful round kick from the rear.

When you deliver the combination of a straight punch and a push kick, you have to be especially mindful of maintaining a stable stance.



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok: Combination 2

Saiyok recommends training in the combination of a rear straight punch, a rotating elbow, and a knee kick. As a variant of the rotating elbow, he uses a reverse elbow, which he delivers to the target from below without prior

rotation. Saiyok is in a southpaw position and starts with a rear straight punch. Next, he takes one step forward in the direction of the trainer and delivers a rotating elbow. He finishes the sequence by pulling in the trainer and delivering a powerful knee kick from the rear.



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok: Combination 3

Saiyok uses the combination of a round kick from the rear, a front reverse elbow without rotation, and a rotating elbow. He is in a southpaw position and begins with a swift round kick from the rear. He then returns the kicking leg to the rear. He twists his body slightly to the left and continues with a reverse elbow. The combination finishes with a rotating elbow from the rear.



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok: Combination 4

Saiyok demonstrates a combination comprising four steps: a front straight punch, an uppercut elbow, a rotating elbow, and a knee kick. From the fight position, Saiyok moves forward with his front foot and delivers a front

straight punch. In direct sequence, he continues with an uppercut elbow with this arm. Next, he uses a rotating elbow from the rear, and finishes with a powerful knee kick.

For swift execution, it is important to deliver the uppercut elbow immediately after the punch without first retracting your arm.



A



B



C



D



E

# 3. Counter Techniques

Counter techniques are always a combination of defense and attacking techniques. Either you prevent the success of your opponent's technique by using a quicker technique, or you use a defense technique before continuing with a swift counter. Your opponent will need to be hit effectively to stop the subsequent technique. Always try to counter after a defense; otherwise your opponent can continue to attack with new techniques.

Generally speaking, counter techniques are more successful when they require fewer steps to implement. Some trainers teach techniques with many steps, and although the use of these techniques is theoretically possible, in a real fight they are very rare. A fighter won't wait until you've finished your counter technique but will try to interrupt it as quickly as possible.

Counter techniques have to be practiced again and again to perfect the timing for competition. You will gradually be able to carry out the techniques faster, with more power, and with better timing until you succeed in using them instinctively in a fight. It doesn't make sense to train in a large number of counter techniques for short periods; if you do not perfect the techniques in training, you won't be able to deliver them in fight. Professional athletes train in counter techniques in each training session and improve their skills in this way. Once you find out who your next opponent will be, your trainer will start training you in counters specifically adapted to your opponent's conduct in a fight.

This section presents some of the best counters from World Champions Saiyok and Kem. Use these techniques, which are frequently employed by both athletes, to become a versatile fighter that your opponents won't be able to figure out. You can watch more techniques in motion on the DVDs *Muay Thai: Counter against Fist and Leg Techniques* (2012) and *Muay Thai: Counter against Elbow, Knee and Clinch Techniques* (2012).


THAI
FIGHT

**The Muay Thai stars Kem Sitsongpeenong and Saiyok Pumphanmuang/Windysport.**

Practice some counter techniques in each training session, agreeing on the attacking and counter techniques with your training partner. Your partner attacks you with the same attacking techniques for some minutes while you defend and counter. To avoid injury to your partner, don't perform the techniques with full power. The technical execution of the techniques must be completely correct, however, or they won't often be successful. Next, switch roles and attack your training partner.

In the images below, keep in mind that Saiyok is fighting in a southpaw position, and Kem is in a conventional stance. If you use the opposite stance, reverse the sides shown.




**The Muay Thai stars Kem Sitsongpeenong and Saiyok Pumphanmuang/Windysport.**

## List of Counters


Saiyok 1: Counter against a Punch
Saiyok 2: Counter against an Elbow
Saiyok 3: Counter against a Round Kick
Saiyok 4: Counter against a Push Kick
Saiyok 5: Counter against a Knee Kick
Saiyok 6: Counter in a Clinch
Kem 1: Counter against a Punch
Kem 2: Counter against an Elbow
Kem 3: Counter against a Round Kick
Kem 4: Counter against a Push Kick
Kem 5: Counter against a Knee Kick
Kem 6: Counter in a Clinch


# Saiyok 1: Counter against a Punch

Saiyok uses this counter against an opponent who uses a lot of punches.

**Execution**
Wait for the right timing, and dodge the punch by leaning back. Once you are able to identify an imminent powerful straight punch at an early stage, lean to the outside to get close to your opponent. Follow up with a rotating elbow while shifting your weight forward. Alternately, you can

deflect the punch with your opposite hand to the outside.

**A–D:** *Saiyok's opponent (left) attacks with the combination of a front and a rear straight punch. Saiyok initially leans back and then to the side. Finally, he follows up with a rotating elbow.*



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok 2: Counter against an Elbow

Saiyok uses this counter against a rotating elbow, side elbow, or uppercut elbow.

**Execution**
Defend yourself by stepping back with your rear foot and leaning back with your upper body. Pay attention to protecting your head and swift execution of the move. Follow up from the rear with a kick to the inside of the leg. As a variant, you can take a large step to the rear and lean back slightly, which will give you more distance from your opponent.

**A–D:** *Saiyok defends by leaning back against a rotating elbow. He promptly follows with a low kick.*



A



B



C



D

## Saiyok 3: Counter against a Round Kick

Saiyok uses a variety of counter techniques against round kicks, and recommends this very effective counter.

**Execution**

Defend yourself by kicking with the opposite leg to your opponent's pivot leg. Deliver the side kick swiftly and lean back with your upper body. Your opponent loses balance and the attack stops. Your opponent is now in an unfavorable position, and you can continue with more attacking techniques. Be mindful of using good timing and your balance in this counter.

**A–D:** *The opponent attacks with a round kick. Saiyok recognizes the impending technique at an early stage and defends with a swift side kick to his opponent's pivot leg.*



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok 4: Counter against a Push Kick

Saiyok uses this counter against a front kick or a side kick to the leg or body.

**Execution**

To defend against a push kick, take a big step back. You

must be very fast. Your opponent will miss the target and be in an unfavorable position, and you can follow up with a round kick from the rear. As a variant, you can also follow up with a straight punch, a knee kick, or a flying elbow.

**A–D:** *The opponent attacks with a powerful push kick to the leg. Saiyok defends himself by taking a large step back and follows with a round kick from the rear.*



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok 5: Counter against a Knee Kick

Saiyok recommends this counter against a front or rear knee kick from a distance.

**Execution**

Defend against the knee kick by taking a step to the front while attacking your opponent with a front straight punch. Move swiftly and stretch your arm. You will stop your opponent's technique and be able to continue with an attacking technique, such as a low kick. In a competition, aim the punch to the face; in training, push the palm of your hand slightly to your opponent's chest.

**A–D:** *The opponent attacks with a knee kick. Saiyok defends himself with a front straight punch and follows with a low kick.*



A



B



C



D

# Saiyok 6: Counter in a Clinch

Saiyok uses this counter against an opponent's grip in a clinch.

**Execution**
Put one hand to your opponent's chin, and use your other hand to grab your opponent's elbow. Next, push away your opponent's chin, push up the elbow, and take a step to the outside. Once you have released yourself from the clinch, you can continue with an effective knee kick. It is important that the movements are carried out with speed and with a jerk.

**A–D:** *The opponent has applied a powerful grip in a clinch. Saiyok releases himself by taking a step to the right and follows up with a knee kick.*



A



B



C



D

# Kem 1: Counter against a Punch

Kem uses this counter against a powerful straight punch from the rear.

**Execution**
Deflect the straight punch to the outside with your opposite hand. Follow up with an uppercut elbow with your other arm. Move forward in the process, and put your weight behind it. The deflection and the counter must be done in a swift and even sequence. An alternative is a counter with a knee kick from the rear.

**A–D:** *Kem's opponent (right) attacks with a rear straight punch. Kem deflects the punch down and to the outside. He promptly follows with an uppercut elbow, for which he takes a small step forward.*



A



B



C



D

# Kem 2: Counter against an Elbow

Kem uses this counter against a rotating elbow or a side elbow.

**Execution**

Block the opponent's attack with an uppercut elbow. Aim for the center of the arm, as this will reduce the effect of the opponent's strike as much as possible. Shift your weight forward in the process. Follow up with an elbow or knee kick from the other side of your body. For the counter to succeed, it is important that you deliver the uppercut elbow quickly—without hesitation—from the fight position to the front.

**A–D:** *Kem blocks a side elbow and follows up with an uppercut elbow with his other arm.*



A



B



C



D

# Kem 3: Counter against a Round Kick

Kem demonstrates a technique that he frequently uses against a round kick to the leg or the body.

**Execution**
Block the kick with your opposite shinbone, and pay attention to maintaining a stable stance. Return your foot to the floor. Next, you can follow up with a round kick or a straight punch from the rear. You can also pull in your opponent with your rear hand before you use a knee kick. As an alternative, you can also return your foot briefly to the floor before you deliver a kick with this leg.

**A–D:** *Kem blocks a kick and returns his foot to the floor in front of him. He then continues with a round kick from the rear.*



A



B



C



D

# Kem 4: Counter against a Push Kick

Kem often uses this counter against a push kick to the body.

**Execution**

Deflect the attack to the side so that your opponent will be in an unfavorable position. You can do the deflection with your inner or outer hand. You can also take a simultaneous step back or to the outside. Depending on the distance to your opponent, continue with a round kick, a straight punch, or a knee kick. In this counter technique, don't hold on to your opponent's kicking leg but deflect it to the outside in an even motion.

**A–D:** *Kem deflects a push kick to the side. He now faces his opponent's back and can follow with an effective round kick.*



A



B



C



D

# Kem 5: Counter against a Knee Kick

Kem recommends this counter against a knee from a distance, such as a straight, lateral, or round knee kick.

**Execution**

Defend against a knee kick by blocking it with a push against the inside of the opponent's thigh. In the process, make sure that your stance is stable, and keep your guard up. Next, return your foot to the floor in front of you and continue with a rotating elbow from the front or rear.

**A–D:** *The opponent attacks Kem with a rear knee kick. Kem blocks it with a knee to his thigh. He grabs his opponent's front hand, pushes it down, and opens his guard. He then follows with an elbow to the unprotected side of his opponent's head.*



A



B



C



D

# Kem 6: Counter in a Clinch

Kem uses this counter in a clinch situation against a knee kick from the outside.

**Execution**

Defend against the attack by throwing your opponent along in the direction of the kick. To do this, pull your opponent to the side with a jerk, bring in your weight, and step slightly back with your inner leg. Attack your opponent with a knee kick as your opponent is losing control and falling to the side. In this counter, the important elements are using the right timing for the throw as well as maintaining your own balance.

**A–D:** *Kem throws his opponent in the direction of his kick and follows up with a knee kick.*



A



B



C



D

# 4. Misleading the Opponent

Use feints to mislead and to tempt your opponent to leave a protective stance. Direct your feint to a specific part of the body. As a result, your opponent will reduce protection of another part of the body, which you can then attack effectively with your subsequent technique. Feints must be swift, and you have to keep your body in a relaxed state. If your feint is slow, your opponent will be able to stop your subsequent technique. A feint is often carried out as an incomplete move, and your opponent suffers only a slight impact; the subsequent technique is delivered with full power. Make your feints at a level or to the side of the body that is different from what you plan to attack for the follow-up technique. The goal is that your opponent will change his or her guard, enabling you to attack an unprotected part of the body with your subsequent technique. To achieve this, focus on the target of the feint and not on the actual target of the follow-up technique.

Not all feints can be performed easily by all Thai boxers. Test the feints and choose those that are best suited to your fight style. Train in feints until they become automatic moves. Only a perfect feint will be successful in a fight, so it's necessary to repeat time and again the feints that you've already learned in order to optimize their timing. The feints shown here can be carried out from the front or rear side of the body. You can see the feints in motion on the DVD *Muay Thai: Training and Techniques* (2012).

| Feint | Follow-up Technique |
|---|---|
| 1. Straight punch | Spinning elbow |
| 2. Elbow hit | Knee kick |
| 3. Kick to the inside of the leg | Kick to the head with the same leg |
| 4. Round kick | Push kick with the same leg |
| 5. Round kick | Side kick with the same leg |
| 6. High kick | Elbow hit |
| 7. Push kick | Straight punch |
| 8. Push kick | Elbow hit |
| 9. Push kick to the body | Round kick to the head with the same leg |
| 10. Push kick to the leg | Knee kick |
| 11. Knee kick | Rotating elbow |
| 12. Knee kick | Spinning elbow |
| 13. Knee kick in a clinch | Sweep |

# 1. Feint: Straight Punch

## Follow-up technique: spinning elbow

**Execution**
Mislead the opponent with a straight punch or side hook. Move your foot on the same side of your body so that it points to the outside, and turn across this foot. Continue with a spinning elbow. The strike can be aimed from below to the chin, or laterally from the outside to the jaw. If you feint with a left punch, turn clockwise and hit with your right elbow. If you feint with a right punch, turn counterclockwise and hit with your left elbow.

**A–D:** *Kem (left) feints with a straight punch. His opponent tries to defend against the punch and changes his guard. Kem steps forward with his left foot, turns clockwise, and continues with a spinning elbow.*



A



B



C



D

# 2. Feint: Elbow Hit

## Follow-up technique: knee kick

**Execution**

Feint with the use of an elbow technique from the side. If your opponent attempts to block your elbow with the

lower arms, attack with a knee kick to the center of the body. You can use your pushing arm for a grip around your opponent's neck to pull your opponent in. The feint and the follow-up technique can be done from the front or rear side of the body. You can also use the feint from one side and continue with a knee kick from the other side. Test the variations, and perfect the one that's best for you.

**A–D:** *Armin (right) feints with an elbow from the rear. His opponent attempts to defend against the attack and changes his guard. Armin promptly grabs his opponent's neck, pulls him in, and delivers a powerful knee kick.*



A



B



C



D

# 3. Feint: Kick to the Inside of the Leg

Follow-up technique: kick to the head with the same leg

**Execution**

Starting from the fight stance, deliver a fast kick to the

front inner part of your opponent's leg. Slight impact with the instep is sufficient. Continue quickly with a powerful round kick to the head. To achieve this, make a full turn of your hip and move your pivot leg farther back. Execute the move quickly to surprise your opponent, who will concentrate on defense of the leg. Fighters usually deliver the kick to the head without first returning the foot to the floor. If you move really fast, you can briefly rest your foot on the floor between kicks to generate momentum.

**A–D:** *Kem feints with a low kick. His opponent tries to defend himself with a block. Kem promptly follows with a round kick to the head.*



A



B



C



D

# 4. Feint: Round Kick

Follow-up technique: push kick with the same leg

**Execution**

Feint with a round kick so that your opponent is misled

into a corresponding defensive reaction. Instead of kicking all the way through, turn your leg in the move and surprise your opponent with a push kick to the head or body. Your leg does not return to the floor between the kicks. The feint is usually done with the rear leg, but it is also possible with the front leg.

**A–E:** *Kem starts with a round kick. His opponent raises his leg to block the kick. In the course of the kicking motion, Kem turns his leg and makes impact with a push kick.*



A



B



C



D



E

# 5. Feint: Round Kick

Follow-up technique: side kick with the same leg

**Execution**

Mislead your opponent with a round kick to the body so that your opponent raises the leg to the outside to block it. In the course of the kicking move, first pull your leg in toward your body and then follow with a side kick to the center of the body. Execute the move quickly, and do it without returning your foot to the floor.

**A–D:** *Saiyok (right) begins with a round kick. His opponent tries to defend himself with a block. In the course of the block, Saiyok pulls his leg in and follows with a side kick.*



A



B



C



D

# 6. Feint: High Kick

## Follow-up technique: elbow hit

### Execution

Mislead your opponent with a high kick. Return your kicking foot to the floor in front of you, and follow up with an uppercut elbow from the other side of your body. Execute the move quickly, and shift your weight in the direction of your opponent during the elbow technique. The goal is that your opponent concentrates on protecting against the high kick. Then you can attack the center or the other side of the head.

**A–D:** *Kem feints with a high kick. He rests his foot on the floor in front of him and follows up with an uppercut elbow.*



A



B



C



D

# 7. Feint: Push Kick

## Follow-up technique: straight punch

### Execution

Feint with a push kick to the body so that your opponent concentrates on defending against it. Instead of delivering a powerful execution of the kick, return your foot to the floor in front of you and at the same time deliver a straight punch. Shift your weight forward during the punch, and execute the move quickly.

**A–D:** *Saiyok feints with a push kick by bending his front knee. His opponent tries to defend himself with a knee block. Saiyok quickly returns his foot to the floor in front of him and delivers a powerful straight punch. Next, he follows with a low kick.*



A



B



C



D

# 8. Feint: Push Kick

## Follow-up technique: elbow hit

**Execution**

Feint with a push kick to the body so that your opponent

lowers one hand to catch or deflect the kick. Instead of completing the kick, lower your leg and quickly return your foot to the floor. Next, quickly continue with an elbow, for which you shift your weight to the front. Execute the move quickly so as to surprise your opponent.

**A–D:** *Saiyok feints a push kick to the body. His opponent lowers his hand to catch the kick. Saiyok returns his foot to the floor and continues with a rotating elbow to the now-unprotected side of his opponent's head.*



A



B



C



D

# 9. Feint: Push Kick to the Body

Follow-up technique: round kick to the head with the same leg

**Execution**

Feint with a push kick to the body. Instead of completing the kick, pull your leg up in a rapid move and continue with a round kick to the head. If you move really fast, you can briefly return your foot to the floor between kicks to generate momentum. The goal is to get your opponent to lower his opposite hand to catch or deflect your push kick.

**A–C:** *Kem feints a push kick to the body. His opponent lowers his opposite hand. Kem follows up with a round kick to the now unprotected side of his opponent's head.*



A



B



C

# 10. Feint: Push Kick to the Leg

## Follow-up technique: knee kick

**Execution**

From the fight position, feint with a push kick to the leg.

Instead of completing the kick, quickly return your foot to the floor in front of you. Next, quickly continue with a powerful knee kick from the rear. The goal is to prompt your opponent's defense action, such as pulling the leg back or taking a step to the rear.

**A–D:** *Kem feints a push kick to the leg and prompts his opponent to pull his leg back. Kem quickly returns his kicking foot to the floor in front of him and follows up with a knee kick from the rear while pulling his opponent toward him.*



A



B



C



D

# 11. Feint: Knee Kick

## Follow-up technique: rotating elbow

### Execution

Feint with a knee kick to the body. Instead of powerfully completing the knee kick, return your foot to the floor in front of you. Continue with a rotating elbow from the same side of your body. Keep your body straight during the knee kick so that you can put your weight behind the following elbow technique.

**A–D:** *Kem feints with a knee kick. He quickly returns his foot to the floor in front of him and continues with a rotating elbow.*



A



B



C



D

# 12. Feint: Knee Kick

Follow-up technique: spinning elbow

**Execution**

Feint with a knee kick. Return your foot to the floor with your toes pointing to the outside, and rotate with your weight on that foot. Follow up with a spinning elbow. You can aim from below to the chin, or sideways from the outside to the jaw. If you feint with a left punch, you have to turn clockwise with a subsequent right elbow. If you feint with a right punch, you have to turn counterclockwise with a subsequent left elbow. As an alternative, you can also feint with a push kick and follow up with a spinning elbow.

**A–D:** *Kem feints a left knee kick. He promptly returns his foot to the floor on the outside, turns clockwise, and continues with an elbow.*



A



B



C



D

# 13. Feint: Knee Kick in a Clinch

## Subsequent technique: sweep

**Execution**

In a clinch, feint with a knee kick to the ribs. Swiftly lower your foot so as to floor your opponent with a sweep

technique. Back up your motion by pushing your forearms against your opponent's upper body. Make the sweep with your shin or with the inside of your leg. Performing the technique with the inside of the foot violates the current Muay Thai rules.

**A–E:** *Kem feints a knee kick and follows with a sweep. In a simultaneous move, he pushes his opponent to the floor on the right.*



A



B



C



D



E


PUNISH
KING
II
BROTHERS

**Kem presents the famous kick "Chorakee Fard Hang."**



**A high round kick from Nonsai Sor Sanyakorn.**

Chapter 5

# Training Plans

## 1. Basics

A sensible training plan is necessary for successfully training your body and for continuously improving your performance level. In this chapter you will learn how a training session should be structured for beginners. You will also find a weekly training plan that ensures continuous improvement in your performance, and an explanation of how the training intensity for amateur athletes should be increased. There is a ten-week training cycle that can be adapted to your personal needs. Professional athletes have to train according to an individual program; a sample eight-week training plan for semiprofessional athletes is outlined here, with the training plans of two Muay Thai superstars, Saiyok and Kem, shown for comparison. Additional details on training plans are included in the book *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters* (2006).

# 2. Training Plans for Beginners

Beginners in Muay Thai first learn the basic attacking techniques and a selection of defense and counter techniques. It is necessary to practice Muay Thai at least twice a week to see progressive improvement. If your goal is significant improvement in your fitness, you should add a weekly training session for power and stamina. Practicing twice a week for at least six months, you should be able to perform the basic techniques correctly. Continue perfecting the techniques in your repertoire more and more, and incorporate more demanding techniques, and you will become an expert in Muay Thai in the course of the coming years. To participate in competitive fights, however, two training sessions per week won't be enough, especially if you don't do any additional power and stamina exercises.



World champion Armin Windysport.

## Daily Training Plan

| Activity | Intensity |
|---|---|
| Warm-up with jogging or skipping | 10–15 minutes |
| Stretching | 5–10 minutes |
| Shadowboxing | 2–3 rounds × 3 minutes |
| Pad training | 2–3 rounds × 3 minutes |
| Punching bag training | 2–3 rounds × 3 minutes |
| Partner training | 10–15 minutes |
| Clinch training | 5 minutes |
| Power exercises | 5–10 minutes |
| Cool-down | 10 minutes |

This intensity is useful for ninety minutes of training. If you practice Muay Thai in solo training and don't have a training partner available, you should extend your shadowboxing, punching bag training, and strength exercises.

## Weekly Training Plan

| Day | Activity |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai |
| Day 2 | Power training or a day off |
| Day 3 | A day off |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai |
| Day 5 | Stamina training or a day off |
| Day 6 | A day off or Muay Thai |
| Day 7 | A day off |

# 3. Training Plans for Amateurs

Your performance will quickly improve with three Muay Thai training sessions per week along with extra fitness training. Stamina training gives you better and extended ability to absorb the Muay Thai–specific training, and strength training enables you to deliver the Muay Thai techniques with power. For amateurs, good results can be seen with five or six training sessions per week. This can be the basis for attaining competitive goals as well,

provided that you don't have to lose too much weight before a fight. If you have to lose a lot of weight to reach your weight class, more than six training sessions a week will be needed, even if you're an amateur.

## Daily Training Plan

| Activity | Intensity |
|---|---|
| Warm-up with jogging or skipping | 15 minutes |
| Stretching | 5–10 minutes |
| Shadowboxing | 2 rounds × 3–4 minutes |
| Pad training | 3 rounds × 3–4 minutes |
| Punching bag training | 3 rounds × 3–4 minutes |
| Partner training | 10–15 minutes |
| Sparring | 15 minutes × 2 sessions per week |
| Clinch training | 5–10 minutes |
| Power exercises | 5–10 minutes |
| Cool-down | 10 minutes |

This level of intensity allows for 90 to 120 minutes of training. If you practice Muay Thai in solo training and don't have a training partner available, you should extend your shadowboxing, punching bag training, and strength exercises.

## Weekly Training Plan

| Day | Activity |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai |
| Day 2 | Power training and/or stamina training |
| Day 3 | Muay Thai |
| Day 4 | A day off, or power training and/or stamina training |
| Day 5 | Muay Thai |
| Day 6 | Power training and/or stamina training |
| Day 7 | A day off |



**Christoph with his trainer, Master Deycha.**

# The Ten-Week Cycle

Your training plan has to be updated often to make new demands on your body. If your body gets accustomed to same routine and training becomes monotonous, your performance will stagnate. New training cycles with somewhat different training goals should be set out continually to cover periods of six to twelve weeks, as shown, for example, in the following ten-week cycle. After concluding a cycle, practice with a slightly altered plan. If you keep notes about your cycles in your training diary, you will be able to monitor the long-term development of your physical performance.

This program aims to improve Muay Thai–specific performance, initially through the development of basic stamina in combination with building up physical strength. **Weeks 1–6** allocate three weekly sessions for improvements in Muay Thai performance, along with two sessions to improve basic stamina. You will get accustomed to power training or the appropriate performance level in one session per week. **Weeks 7–10** maintain the intensity of Thai boxing training. The main goal of stamina training is to maintain your performance level, for which one session a week is enough. Power training increases to two sessions per week.



| Week | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Day off |
| 2 | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Day off |
| 3 | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Day off |
| 4 | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Day off |
| 5 | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Day off |
| 6 | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Day off |
| 7 | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Day off |
| 8 | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Day off |
| 9 | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Day off |
| 10 | Muay Thai | Power training | Muay Thai | Stamina training | Muay Thai | Power training | Day off |

In the preceding table, **stamina training** sessions can include, for example, running, cycling, or swimming. **Power training** sessions should involve a program for the entire body, using dumbbells or power equipment. **Days off** are training-free days for regenerating the body.

# 4. Training Plans for Professional Athletes

Professional athletes dedicate their entire lives to the sport to achieve the best possible level of performance. Equal importance must be placed on correct nutrition and allowing the body to regenerate. One training session is usually planned for the morning and one for the afternoon. Sunday is a day to rest to regenerate the body.

Athletes often prepare themselves for a fight with an eight-to twelve-week training plan. Once they find out

who their opponent will be as well as the framework of the fight, the trainer develops a training program tailored to the individual requirements of the athlete that includes, for example, how much weight will be lost and preparing for the opponent's fighting style.

After the fight, the training intensity is slightly reduced to allow for regeneration of the athlete. For several weeks a new cycle proceeds that allows the current performance level to be maintained and that eliminates weak spots in performance. As soon as the date for the next fight has been set, the trainer will develop a new competitive training program.

Fights can be also agreed to on short notice—for example, if another athlete is unable to compete and the promoter has to find a replacement. Thai athletes in the lower weight divisions frequently compete in numerous fights, which requires them to train at high intensity year-round so that they are ready and fit for a competition at a moment's notice and are able to accept such offers.



**Kem and Sitthichai Sitsongpeenong while sparring.**

## Training for Thai Professionals

In many of the Thai gyms, the fighters follow a training program that corresponds to the one below or is very similar. Training comprises six morning and six evening training sessions per week at different levels of intensity. Most Thai gyms are closed on Sunday to allow for the

regeneration of the athletes.

## Morning Training

| | Hard | Soft |
|---|---|---|
| Running or skipping | 4 miles or 15 minutes | 2 miles or 10 minutes |
| Shadowboxing | 15 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Punching bag training | 5 rounds | 3 rounds |
| Pad training | 5 rounds | 3 rounds |
| Partner and clinch training | 20 minutes | 15 minutes |
| Power exercises | as needed | as needed |

## Afternoon Training

| | Hard | Soft |
|---|---|---|
| Skipping or running | 20 minutes or 4 miles | 15 minutes or 2 miles |
| Shadowboxing | 15 minutes | 10 minutes |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Punching bag training | 5 rounds | 3 rounds |
| Pad training | 5 rounds | 3 rounds |
| Sparring at high or medium intensity (3 rounds per week) | 20 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Partner and clinch training | 20 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Power exercises | as needed | as needed |

Note that only professional athletes can train at such high intensity twice a day. This training also includes a break for regeneration at midday. Semiprofessional athletes usually only have time for one session per day, which they have to maximize to achieve their training goals.

## Fight Preparation

Ambitious athletic goals require you to work out a detailed training program if you hope to achieve a higher performance level than your opponents. No single program works for all Thai boxers; you have to set up a program appropriate to your individual characteristics and requirements.

This section presents a training plan with sensible fight preparation techniques for semiprofessional Thai boxers.

Professional Thai boxers usually have two daily training sessions six days a week, which requires adequate breaks for regeneration. In setting up an individual training program, you have to prepare your body for martial arts competition and in all aspects of fitness, especially in terms of stamina, power, and speed. Generally speaking, hard and soft training sessions should alternate every other day. The intensity of training is reduced somewhat a few days before the fight, and sparring sessions are left out so as to avoid injuries. Athletes usually relax the day before a fight.

In specific Muay Thai training, the program is tailored to the fight as soon as the opponent is known, and the intensity of training is increased. The trainer determines the fight tactics to be used and chooses appropriate counter tactics and combinations. If the opponent has excelled as a hard hitter in previous fights, for example, training will focus on high round kicks to the upper arm, and the trainer will have his athlete concentrate on pad training in repetitive kicks from various positions. Repeated knee kicks and push kicks from the opposite side are also suitable in a fight against this kind of opponent. The athlete trains in the appropriate fight tactics over and over until they are known by heart, which means that an athlete's sparring partner has to imitate the fight style of the upcoming opponent.


MUAYTHAI-DVD
.COM

Kem and Sitthichai Sitsongpeenong while sparring .

# Sample Eight-Week Training Program for Competition

This program shows how advanced Thai boxers set out a plan for an eight-week training cycle to prepare for a competition. This plan should only be viewed as a basic example, since individual factors, such as the need to lose weight before a fight, for example, aren't taken into consideration.

## Week 1

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai |
| Day 2 | Jogging at medium intensity for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 3 | Power training whole-body program |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai |
| Day 5 | Jogging at low intensity for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 6 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 2

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai |
| Day 2 | Interval runs for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 3 | Power training whole-body program |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai |
| Day 5 | Power training whole-body program and jogging at low intensity for 20–30 minutes |
| Day 6 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai |

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 2 | Interval runs for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 3 | Power training whole-body program |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai |
| Day 5 | Power training whole-body program and jogging at low intensity for 20–30 minutes |
| Day 6 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai |
| Day 2 | Interval runs with short sprints for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 3 | Muay Thai |
| Day 4 | Power training whole-body program |

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 5 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 6 | Swimming |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 5

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai with emphasis on competitive tactics |
| Day 2 | Power training whole-body program |
| Day 3 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai with emphasis on competitive tactics |
| Day 5 | Interval runs with short sprints for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 6 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai with emphasis on competitive tactics |
| Day 2 | Interval runs with short sprints for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 3 | Power training whole-body program |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 5 | Swimming or jogging at low intensity for 40–60 minutes |
| Day 6 | Muay Thai with emphasis on competitive tactics |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 7

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 2 | Sprint training: sprints over 60 yards alternating with relaxed jogging |
| Day 3 | Power training whole-body program |
| Day 4 | Muay Thai with emphasis on competitive tactics |
| Day 5 | Interval runs for 40 minutes |
| Day 6 | Muay Thai with emphasis on sparring |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Week 8

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 1 | Muay Thai with review of competition tactics |
| Day 2 | Shadowboxing with review of competition tactics |
| Day 3 | Jogging at a low heart rate for 30 minutes |

| | |
|---|---|
| Day 4 | Relaxed shadowboxing |
| Day 5 | Rest |
| Day 6 | Competition |
| Day 7 | Rest |

## Notes on the Training Program

- Interval runs are for a set amount of time at different speeds. Alternate a quick run over a distance of four hundred yards, for example, with a slow jog of a few minutes until your heart rate has gone down again.
- For strength training, do full-body training made up of eight to ten exercises. Reduce the intensity of the strength training in the last weeks before a fight.
- Stick to a healthy diet tailored to your needs and goals, and eat protein-rich foods so that you can achieve optimal results and minimize the risk of injury and infection.
- Extend your sleep time to regenerate your body. Other recommended regenerative measures are massages and sauna visits at least once a week.
- After a competition, take a recreational time-out for several days. Light training, such as jogging at low intensity, resumes after one week at most. At that point you should set up your next training cycle.

## Saiyok's and Kem's Daily Training Plans

Saiyok and Kem compete in a lot of fights, which is why they train at competitive intensity nearly all year long. Saiyok eases off training at competitive intensity only on Sunday, when he does normal intensity training. Saiyok trains in clinching only four times a week, and he does push-ups between the training rounds on the pads and on the punching bag.



**Kem training elbow strikes.**

# Morning Training

| | Saiyok's standard training | Saiyok's fight preparation | Kem's standard training | Kem's fight preparation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jogging | 6 miles (10 × 100-yard sprints) | 6 miles (10 × 100-yard sprints) | 90 min. | 120 min. |
| Skipping rope | 20 min. | 20 min. | 20 min. | 20 min. |
| Shadowboxing | 3–4 × 4 min. | 3–4 × 4 min. | 1 × 5 min. | 1 × 5 min. |
| Pad training | 3–4 × 4 min. | 3–4 × 4 min. | 4 × 4 min. | 5 × 4 min. |
| Punching bag training | 4–5 × 4 min. | 4–5 × 4 min. | 4 × 4 min. | 5 × 4 min. |
| Partner training and sparring | 30 min. | 30 min. | 15 min. | 15 min. |
| Clinching | ❄ | ❄ | 20 min. | 30 min. |
| Pull-ups | 4–5 × 20 repetitions | 4–5 × 20 repetitions | 15 × 10 repetitions | 15 × 10 repetitions |
| Push-ups | 10 × 20 repetitions | 10 × 20 repetitions | 1 × 100 repetitions | 1 × 100 repetitions |
| Sit-ups | 3 × 100 repetitions | 3 × 100 repetitions | 2 × 100 repetitions | 3 × 100 repetitions |

# Afternoon Training

| | Saiyok's standard training | Saiyok's fight preparation | Kem's standard training | Kem's fight preparation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jogging | 3 miles (5 × 100-yard sprints) | 3 miles (5 × 100-yard sprints) | ❄ | ❄ |
| Skipping rope | 30 min. | 30 min. | 20 min. | 20 min. |
| Shadowboxing | 3–4 × 4 min. | 3–4 × 4 min. | 1 × 5 min. | 1 × 5 min. |
| Pad training | 4–5 × 4 min. | 4–5 × 4 min. | 4 × 4 min. | 6 × 4 min. |
| Punching bag training | 4–5 × 4 min. | 4–5 × 4 min. | 4 × 4 min. | 5 × 4 min. |
| Partner training and sparring | 30–60 min. | 30–60 min. | 20 min. | 20 min. |
| Clinching | 15–20 min. | 15–20 min. | 30 min. | 30 min. |
| Pull-ups | 4–5 × 20 repetitions | 4–5 × 20 repetitions | 15 × 10 repetitions | 15 × 10 repetitions |
| Push-ups | 10 × 20 repetitions | 10 × 20 repetitions | 1 × 100 repetitions | 1 × 100 repetitions |
| Sit-ups | 3 × 100 repetitions | 3 × 100 repetitions | 3 × 100 repetitions | 3 × 100 repetitions |

# Saiyok's and Kem's Weekly Training Plans

## Morning Training

| | Saiyok's standard training | Saiyok's fight preparation | Kem's standard training | Kem's fight preparation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 1.5 hours and 1.5 hours Muay Thai | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Thai |
| Tuesday | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 1.5 hours and 1.5 hours Muay Thai | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Thai |
| Wednesday | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 1.5 hours and 1.5 hours Muay Thai | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Thai |
| Thursday | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 1.5 hours and 1.5 hours Muay Thai | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Thai |
| Friday | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 1.5 hours and 1.5 hours Muay Thai | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Thai |
| Saturday | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | Run 1.5 hours and 1.5 hours Muay Thai | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Thai |
| Sunday | 30 min. relaxed training | Run 6 miles with sprints and 2 hours Muay Thai | * | Run 2 hours and 2 hours Muay Tha |

## Afternoon Training

| | Saiyok's standard training | Saiyok's fight preparation | Kem's standard training | Kem's fight preparation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | 2.5 hours Muay Thai | 3 hours Muay Thai |
| Tuesday | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | 2.5 hours Muay Thai | 3 hours Muay Thai |
| Wednesday | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | 2.5 hours Muay Thai | 3 hours Muay Thai |
| Thursday | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | 2.5 hours Muay Thai | 3 hours Muay Thai |
| Friday | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | 2.5 hours Muay Thai | 3 hours Muay Thai |
| Saturday | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | 2.5 hours Muay Thai | 3 hours Muay Thai |
| Sunday | 30 min relaxed training | Run 3 miles with sprints and 3 hours Muay Thai | * | 3 hours Muay Thai |


PLAZA


MUAY THAI-UNO

**A high kick from world champion Saiyok Windysport.**

# Books and DVDs by Christoph Delp

*Muay Thai Basics: Introductory Thai Boxing Techniques*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2005.

*Kickboxing: The Complete Guide*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2006.

*Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2006.

*Muay Thai Counter Techniques*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2013.

*Muay Thai DVD: Training and Techniques* (PAL). Lampertheim, Germany: Delp Sportverlag, 2013.

*Muay Thai DVD: Training with World Champions: Saiyok and Kem* (NTSC). Walnut, CA: Cranes Production, 2013.

*Muay Thai DVD: Training with World Champions: Saiyok and Kem* (PAL). Lampertheim, Germany: Delp Sportverlag, 2013.

*Muay Thai DVD: Counter against Elbow, Knee and Clinch Techniques* (NTSC). Walnut, CA: Cranes Production, 2012.

*Muay Thai DVD: Counter against Elbow, Knee and Clinch Techniques* (PAL). Lampertheim, Germany: Delp Sportverlag, 2012.

*Muay Thai DVD: Counter against Fist and Leg Techniques* (NTSC). Walnut, CA: Cranes Production, 2012.

*Muay Thai DVD: Counter against Fist and Leg Techniques* (PAL). Lampertheim, Germany: Delp Sportverlag, 2012.

*Muay Thai DVD: Basic Techniques*. Lampertheim, Germany: Delp Sportverlag, 2012.

# Online Resources


INDY

www.muaythai.com
www.muaythai.de
www.muaythai-dvd.com
www.youtube.com/muaythaidvd
www.facebook.com/muaythaidvd
www.facebook.com/muaythaibooks

# The Book Team

# About the Athletes in This Book

## Surasak Pakcotakang

Fighter name: Kem Sitsongpeenong

Approximately 140 professional fights as of August 2012

A selection of his titles: World Champion (WMC 154 IBS), two-time Thai Champion, Rajadamnern Champion, Thai Fight Champion www.sitsongpeenong.com



## Sakda Neamhom

Fighter names: Saiyok Pumphanmuang, Windysport Approximately 230 professional fights as of August 2012

A selection of his titles: World Champion (WMC), Lumpinee Champion, Rajadamnern Champion, Channel TV3 Champion, Thailand Champion Awards: Best Fighter 2010



## Armin Matli

Fighter names: Armin Pumphanmuang, Black Dragon Swiss Approximately 120 professional fights as of August

2012

A selection of his titles: World Champion, two-time Thailand Champion Fights and participates in seminars worldwide

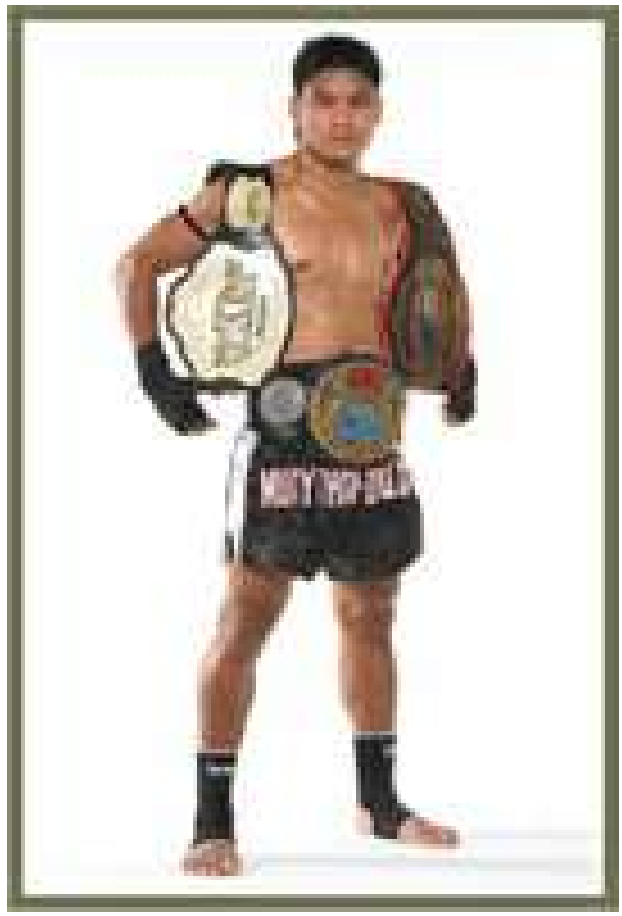


## Nonsai Srisuk

Fighter name: Nonsai Sor. Sanyakorn

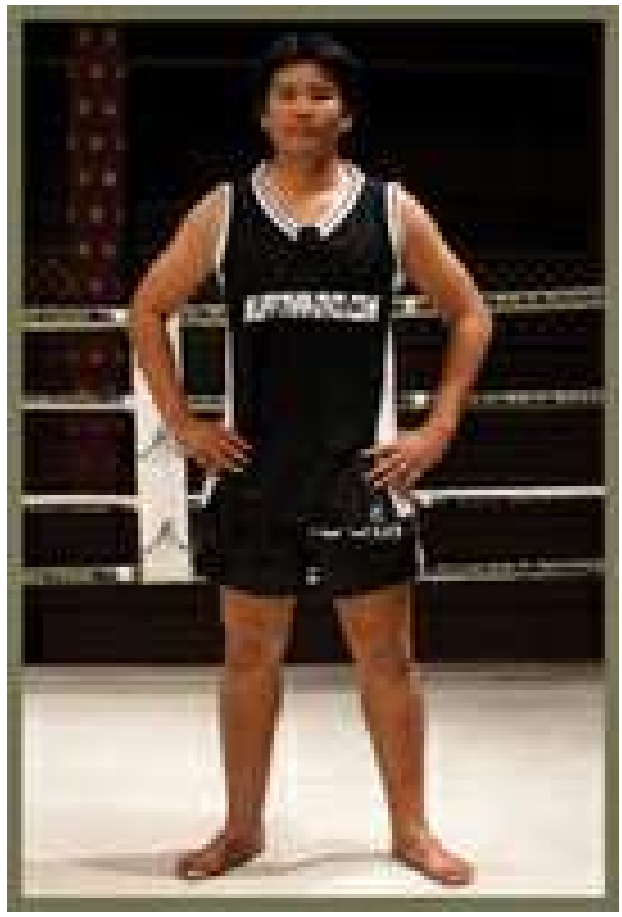
Approximately 150 professional fights as of August 2012

A selection of his titles: WMC international Champion, Champion WPMF, Isaan Champion Fights and participates in seminars worldwide



## Pit Khaisaeng

Trainer of many world champions, including Saiyok, Nonsai, Armin, and Jaochalam



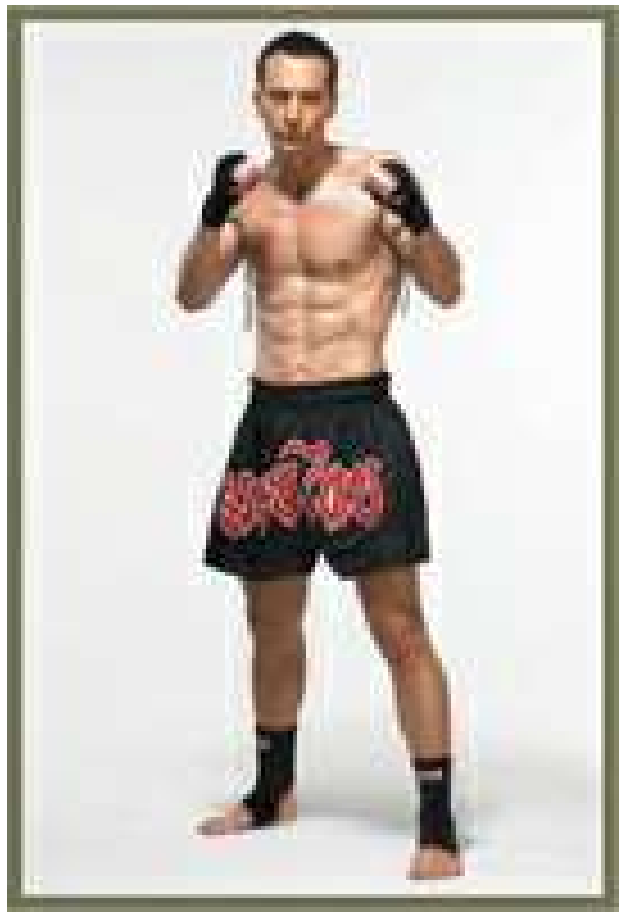
# About the Author

## Christoph Delp

MBA and author; Muay Thai and fitness coach

Trainer education 1995–2001 with fight experience Producer and author of the 2012–2013 Muay Thai DVD series Some of his publications: *Muay Thai Counter Techniques* (2013), *Kickboxing: The Complete Guide* (2006), *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters* (2006), *Muay Thai Basics* (2005), www.christophdelp.de, www.muaythaibook.com, www.muaythaidvd.com,

www.youtube.com/muaythaidvd,
www.facebook.com/muaythaibooks



# About the Photographer

## Nopphadol Viwatkamolwat

Professional photographer since 1996

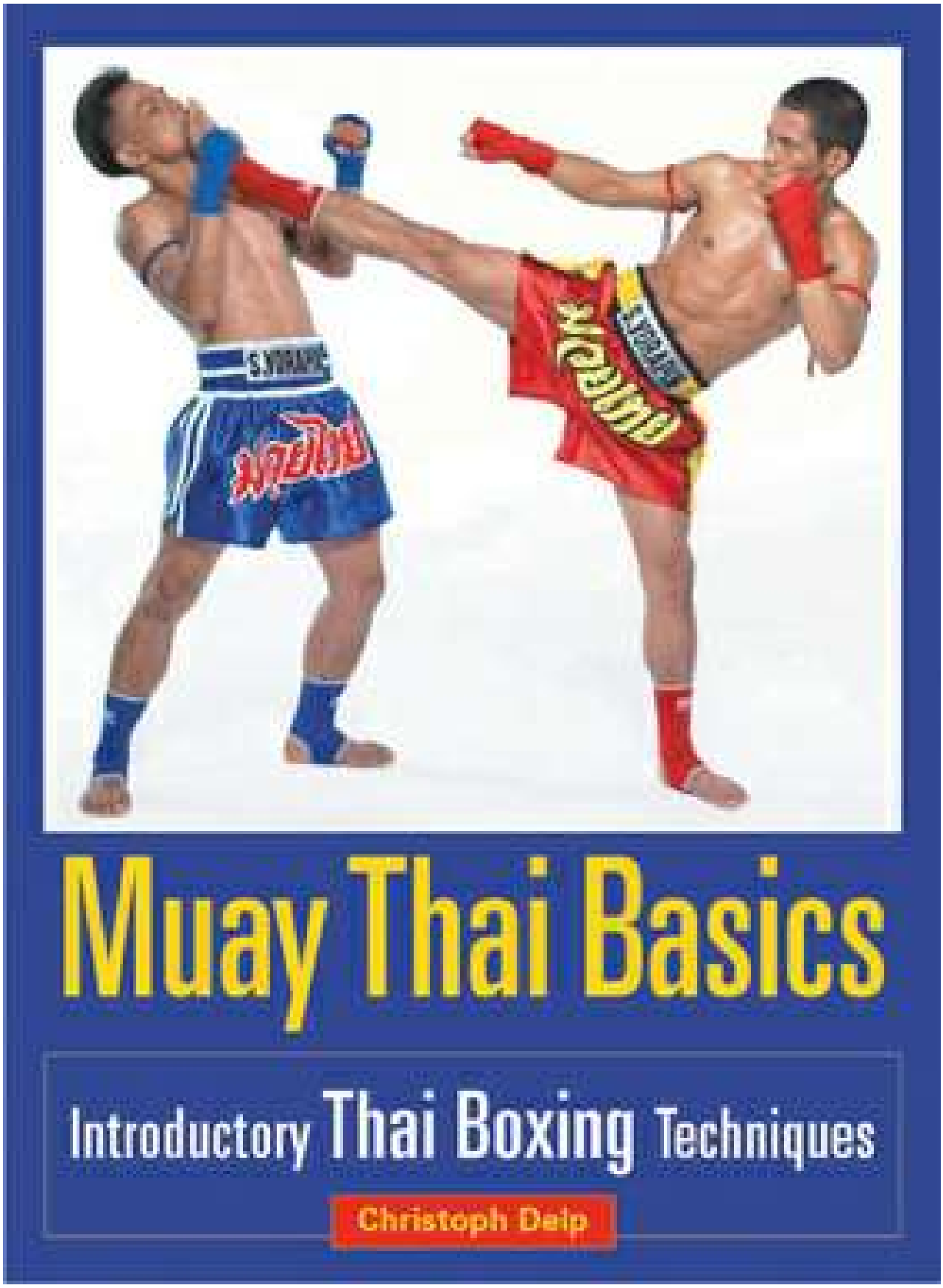
Brooks Institute of Photography, Santa Barbara, CA
www.astudioonline.com



# Other Resources

## Muay Thai Basics: Introductory Thai Boxing Techniques

978-1-58394-140-9
$22.95 / $29.95 CAN
Blue Snake Books




Muay Thai, also referred to as Thai boxing, combines

fitness training, self-defense, and competitive sport. In this hands-on guide, renowned trainer Christoph Delp presents the sport's history, development, rules, and equipment.

He explains basic skills, such as the correct starting position and footwork, and offers a complete list of all offensive techniques, as well as a selection of effective defensive and counterattack strategies. The techniques are presented step-by-step by Thai champions from the famous Sor Vorapin gym in Bangkok, showing readers the fine details of each technique. The training section provides detailed information about the structure, content, and planning of training regimens; this includes historical training methods, a stretching program, and training schedules. Suitable as both a self-training guide and a supplement to club training, *Muay Thai Basics* offers authoritative instruction for Thai boxers and other martial arts enthusiasts.

## Muay Thai Counter Techniques: Competitive Skills and Tactics for Success

978-1-58394-543-8
$22.95 / $25.95 CAN
Blue Snake Books



# Muay Thai Counter Techniques

## Competitive Skills and Tactics for Success

Christoph Delp

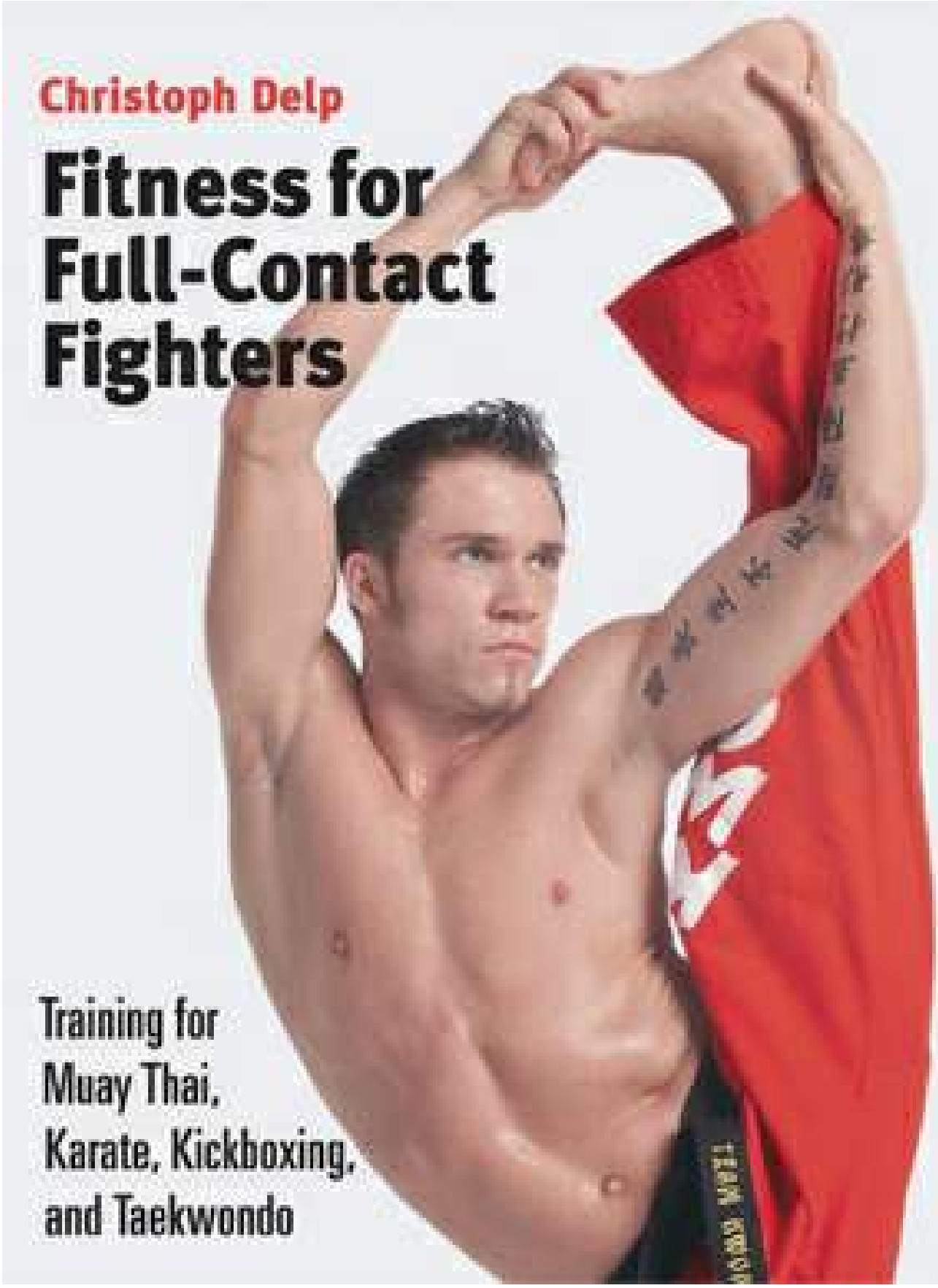
Designed for intermediate-level Thai boxing and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighters, *Muay Thai Counter Techniques* teaches how to counter a wide range of opponents' attacks. Over the last twenty years, Muay Thai, also known as Thai boxing, has become popular around the world as a form of fitness training, a competitive sport, and a means of self-defense. In this thoroughly revised and updated edition of *Muay Thai: Advanced Thai Kickboxing Techniques*, author Christoph Delp helps intermediate Muay Thai students (those with at least six months of training) further their study of their art. Delp explains the rules and ceremonial procedures unique to Muay Thai competition, demonstrates historical and modern techniques, provides training tips, and details the benefits of training in Thailand—experiencing the art in its country of origin.

A primary focus of *Muay Thai Counter Techniques* is on counter tactics, or techniques used to counter an attack from one's opponent. Muay Thai is a martial art with a variety of impressive techniques; every attacking technique can be countered with a large number of variants. No two fighters will react to an attack in the same way, because while most Muay Thai fighters learn the same basic techniques (as presented in Delp's earlier book *Muay Thai Basics*), each fighter will go on to learn a wide variety of secondary techniques and will adapt them to his or her individual fighting style. This edition includes new full-color photographs throughout in which many well-known Muay Thai fighters—including champions like Saiyok Pumphanmuang, Kem Sitsongpeenong, and many others—demonstrate the most

important techniques for competitive success.

## Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters: Training for Muay Thai, Karate, Kickboxing, and Taekwondo

978-1-58394-157-7
$22.95 / $28.50 CAN
Blue Snake Books




Physical fitness is an absolutely vital element for success

in the martial arts. It is the only way to ensure that powerful attacking techniques and rapid defense and counterattacking techniques can be employed over the full course of a competition. Martial artists require a special fitness training program that covers all aspects of physical performance.

In *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters*, author Christoph Delp presents a fitness training program tailored to the martial arts. The book details the basics of fitness training and offers an in-depth description of the various elements of fitness training: flexibility, stamina, and power. The exercises are presented step-by-step by leading martial artists. The book focuses on planning and monitoring training and presents complete training programs for newcomers as well as those at an advanced level. There is also advice about the correct diet for martial artists. This book is an indispensable guide for martial artists of all abilities, and it will help them to improve their ability to perform in training and competition.

## Kickboxing: The Complete Guide to Conditioning, Technique, and Competition

978-1-58394-178-2
$26.95 / $34.95
Blue Snake Books

# KICKBOXING

## The Complete Guide to Conditioning, Technique, and Competition

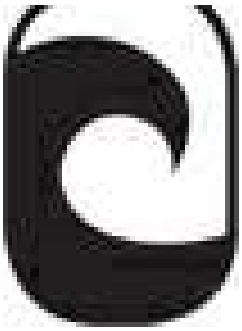


**Christoph Delp**

*author of Muay Thai Basics and Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters*

foreword by **Martin Albers**, World Champion

This comprehensive training manual features all the information needed for a successful start in kickboxing, right up to winning the match in the ring. Author Christoph Delp, an expert fitness coach and an experienced kickboxing and Muay Thai trainer, begins by describing kickboxing's history, development, and rules. The technical section explains all of the attacking techniques found in kickboxing, as well as important defense and feinting skills. In spectacular photographs, champion kickboxers demonstrate the skills step by step, enabling the reader to easily duplicate the exercises and understand the technical fine points. Chapters dedicated to training and competition contain vital information on training plans and structure, contest preparation, and competitive strategy. An ideal companion for beginners, the book is also an excellent reference for active kickboxers and other martial arts athletes who want to improve their punching and kicking techniques. Readers can use the book to train on their own or as a complement to club training.



# North Atlantic Books
# Berkeley, California

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